Golf Johnnie Walker Classic

Stalking Tiger pounces on Els

David Davies in Phuket

THREE days before it became official, the Year of the Tiger was proclaimed last Sunday in Thailand. The Johnnie Walker Classic was won by Tiger Woods in one of the most amazing comebacks in golfing history. Eleven shots behind after 36 holes, eight behind after 54, Woods put together a final-round 65, seven under par, to catch Ernie Els, then beat him in a sudden-death play-off.

"It's just another year," Woods said afterwards, and, beaming suddenly, added, "but it's got my name on it."

The play-off between Woods, the world No 1 and Masters champion, and Els, the world No 3 and US Open champion, lasted two holes. They played the 18th twice and on the second occasion the American holed a 12-foot birdie putt which sealed victory and set him off on that violent air-punching routine, featuring a right hook some boxers would die for.

It also earned him $220,000 and, as it was his eighth win in 18 months as a professional, consolidated his position at the top of the world rankings. It was the biggest recovery since, in 1992, Jamie Spence won his solitary European Tour victory by coming from 10 shots behind in the final round to beat Anders Forsbrand in a play-off.

Woods has always believed that there is no point in playing unless you expect to win, a belief perfectly expressed earlier when he was 11 behind one of the world's best players. He was asked whom he expected to win and he first of all stared at his questioner and then, without the trace of a smile, and maintaining full eye contact, said: "Me."

He is not, of course, stupid; he realised that something remarkable would have to happen, but he also knows that his incredible talent can bring such things about.

"It's just weird, isn't it?" he said afterwards. "I honestly figured that Ernie would birdie the 11th, go to 11 under and that would be the winning score. When I came to the course I thought I needed a 62, to get to 12 under, and when I did not do that I thought it had gone. I thought my round was a good round but that they would give the trophy to Ernie or Nick [Faldo].

"I certainly didn't think that Ernie would retreat as he did; I thought he had his bad round on Saturday. It was amazing to watch it unfold. I suppose you've got to wonder how far back I can recover from."

Last Sunday he passed 17 players who started in front of him to win — his best performance to date — although he did once make up 12 shots on Mark O'Meara in a tournament at Pebble Beach but still [illegible] ished second. Els, who went [illegible] ambling to shambling over the [illegible] nine holes, had to hole a [illegible] birdie putt from 13 feet at the [illegible] just to get into the play-off.

"I knew how difficult that [illegible] was," said Woods, watching [illegible] the clubhouse. "It was so hard that [illegible] decided not to go to the practice ground." When it went in, Woods shot off to hit some balls.

After a few wedges he hit "the driver shots as hard as I could to get all the nervous energy out". But [illegible] did not succeed. His first tee shot — "all adrenalin" — went 311 yards, giving him 84 to the pin. The [illegible] wedge shot, though, carried [illegible] yards on to the back fringe, needing only six more inches to be in [illegible] grass.

"I was telling myself, 'Just give yourself a second chance,'" said Woods. He did, by holing from [illegible] feet for par. The second time around it was Els who was far too str[illegible], with his second, but he manufactured a lovely little chip to five fe[illegible]. Woods, though, gave him no chance to hole it.

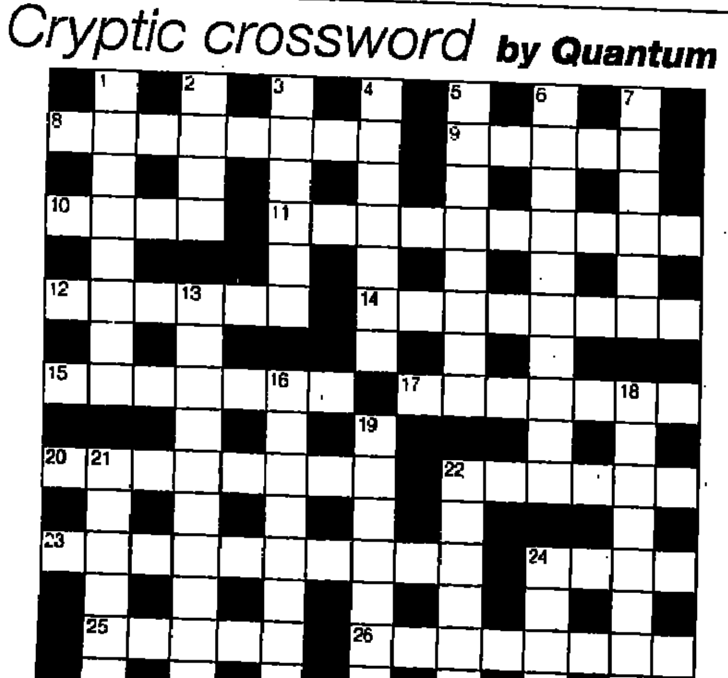
Faldo's Masterplan for Ma[illegible] the strategy by which he gets himself ready by the end of that mo[illegible] to challenge at the US Masters, [illegible] off to a stuttering start.

He was eight under after the [illegible] nine, only two behind Els, and all to play for on the homeward half. [illegible] the Englishman's putting [illegible] almost too bad to be believed. At the 10th he rolled a 20ft birdie attempt no more than three feet from the hole and missed comprehensively, barely touching the hole.

Faldo finished with a 75 [illegible] behind him there was not a wors[illegible] final-round score until the Kore[illegible] No-Seok Park's 76 for joint [illegible] place.

Packing a punch . . . Woods celebrates his victory after beating Els in a play-off PHOTO: ANDREW REDINGTON

Cryptic crossword by Quantum



Across

8 It's a blow in the way of one's progress (4,4)
9 The poet's under cover in Wales (5)
10 The last letter written by some fool (4)
11 A county council tried repairing road: needed to make purchases? (6,4)
12 Sailor coming into base is possible (6)
14 Alloy 25 is one ranked highly (5,3)
15 The girl can put back the publication of dates (7)
17 Claimed about a fraction (7)
20 Don't notice as much? No marks (8)
22 Some drunk individuals can be (6)
23 Nursery rhyme character not for family reception? (5,5)
24 Switching on time (4)
25 Military high-up has dealt a blow (5)
26 I got nail broken carving (8)

Down

1 Friend grasps most of a language? Splendid! (8)
2 Part-time employment manoeuvre (4)
3 Ring for a part in theatre (6)
4 E.g. strangely and oddly ? (7)
5 Friendly hint (8)
6 Stay after the game to see what's left after strike (10)
7 Phase could be about right for a mountaineer (6)
13 I'm known for my parlour tricks (10)
16 Dislike of a teacher, say, for a particular form? (8)
18 Coasting at sea ? I'll take some convincing (8)
19 I'm austere, I'm 18, but not quiet (7)
21 Gloss over language used about Europe (6)
22 At University, a shame to be pretentious (6)
24 Finds after searching, a pied-à-terre (4)

Last week's solution

Football FA Cup: Stevenage 1 Newcastle Utd 1

Class act from cup minnows

David Lacey

NEWCASTLE UNITED got what they wanted last Sunday though hardly what they had bargained for. As a bitter easterly wind blew across the Hertfordshire steppes, Stevenage revived the essence of the FA Cup with a performance to warm the heart, not to mention the feet.

The Vauxhall Conference club had insisted on playing this fourth-round tie at their small but well appointed stadium despite objections from the opposition. Now Newcastle will indeed be hosting Stevenage at St James' Park but only after a 1-1 draw in which the Premiership team were matched for physique, stamina and even skill by the non-league side.

When Alan Shearer, starting his first match for Newcastle since returning from a five-month lay-off, headed them in front after less than three minutes the tie was threatened with a sense of anticlimax as numbing as the conditions. But shortly before half-time Giuliano Grazioli nodded the scores level and thereafter Stevenage did not so much hold out as hold their own.

They could not quite come up with another Ricky George, the Hereford United substitute whose goal had so memorably knocked out Newcastle in a third-round replay 26 years earlier. Yet at times the tie did have the feel of another Hereford about it, especially in the period leading up to Grazioli's goal when the match became dominated by Neil Trebble, a 28-year-old former Grenadier Guardsman.

Trebble was outstanding. Showing surprisingly nimble control and an astute sense of positioning, he frequently drifted into space near goal and Newcastle never worked out how to pick him up.

After 32 minutes Trebble, in a lot of space on the left, centred for Grazioli to beat Shaka Hislop only to be given marginally offside. Instead of allowing this to depress them, Stevenage swung straight back to the attack and were eventually rewarded.

Crawshaw took a corner on the left and the stiff wind helped the ball swing into the goalmouth, where Grazioli's head glanced the scores level. From then on Stevenage, as well as hoping they could win, never seriously believed they would lose.

Newcastle did not play badly but there were parts of the game where they were simply not allowed to play any better. Newcastle should prevail and earn a fifth-round home tie against Tranmere Rovers, but at least Stevenage earned the right to dream on a little longer.

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The Washington Post · Le Monde

Australians debate the Queen's role

THE debate on Australia's constitution intensified this week with feverish attempts by republican groups to resolve differences and find a consensus at the Constitutional Convention, *reports Christopher Zinn in Canberra.*

The prime minister, John Howard, who opened the convention, said: "I oppose Australia becoming a republic because I do not believe that the alternatives so far canvassed will deliver a better system of government. Some will deliver a worse outcome and gravely weaken our system of government."

The only fault with the present system was the symbolism of sharing the Queen as legal head of state with other nations, he said.

A majority of the 152 delegates are republicans, but they are deeply split on issues including whether a president should be elected by popular vote or by a joint sitting of parliament.

Monarchists know the convention is likely to endorse a republic, but the latest polls suggest the public may reject constitutional change in the referendum due next year.

Kim Beazley, the leader of the opposition Labor party which started its republican campaign in 1982, said that, though the country was already a republic in all but name, it needed an Australian head of state.

"Australians elected a majority republican convention because, far from seeing dangers in the move to a republic, they see potential problems with a system of government with which, increasingly, Australians cannot identify," Mr Beazley said.

The latest survey shows that 52 per cent of Australians favour a republic, and 37 per cent the status quo.

Malcolm Turnbull, chairman of the Australian Republican Movement, is preparing to urge all republicans to embrace changes, such as acknowledging prior Aboriginal occupation and showing respect for human rights and the environment.

He told the convention that the Queen was a magnificent embodiment of the British nation, but she was not a local. "An Australian head of state should be an Australian, represent Australian values, live in Australia and be chosen by and answerable to Australians."

Mr Howard said that if the convention did not reach a clear consensus on a republican model the electorate would chose one in a non-binding plebiscite. The issue would then be put to a referendum.

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West heads for showdown with Iraq

Ian Black and Ewen MacAskill in London and Julian Borger in Jerusalem

THE United States and Britain were still locked on a collision course with Saddam Hussein on Monday as Russian mediators struggled to win concessions to avert a military outcome to the crisis over United Nations weapons inspections.

After a confusing flurry of statements, Baghdad insisted it had not agreed to allow UN inspectors into off-limits presidential palaces — though the reported offer had already met a hostile reception in Washington and London. Riyad al-Qaisi, an Iraqi deputy foreign minister, dismissed the reported offer as "totally incorrect" but said discussions were continuing.

Iraq also denied Russian claims that President Saddam was willing to meet the chief UN arms inspector, Richard Butler, to discuss the stand-off that has brought threats of "substantial" US-led military action.

Russia was clearly eager for success. Boris Yeltsin telephoned Bill Clinton with news of the offer but reactions were swift and negative. Bill Richardson, the US ambassador to the UN, said bluntly: "This so-called compromise is unacceptable."

Tony Blair's spokesman said: "We need some convincing that this is any more than game-playing. I do not think it much changes where we are."

The British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, told the House of Commons: "Although we are pursuing a diplomatic solution, we have not, nor will we, rule out the use of force. Without effective . . . monitoring Iraq could produce enough anthrax every week to fill two missile warheads and could within weeks be producing a large volume of nerve gas."

Russia had reported that President Saddam was ready to allow UN inspectors to visit eight previously closed "presidential" sites as representatives of their governments and to be accompanied by diplomats from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

But the grounds adjoining the sites would be excluded from inspections — rendering the offer meaningless in the light of reports that great efforts have been made to conceal suspected chemical and biological weapons programmes.

Since last year President Saddam has refused to allow the UN to check some 60 sites, including about 40 presidential palaces, on grounds of national sovereignty. The UN is insisting on "full and unconditional access".

Monday's developments came after Mr Yeltsin warned that military action was "fraught with unpredictable consequences and would cause big casualties among civilians".

Israel began preparing its defences against the threat of an Iraqi attack by setting up US-made Patriot missiles near the Dimona nuclear reactor in the Negev desert.

Madeleine Albright, the US secretary of state, spent Monday in Saudi Arabia as part of a hastily organised Middle East and European tour to drum up support for air strikes. She said that Washington and Riyadh had agreed that "if diplomacy fails to achieve a solution, Saddam Hussein will be responsible for the grave consequences".

Apart from Kuwait, only Britain has thrown its weight unconditionally behind Washington. Six Sea Harrier jump jets left Britain to join the aircraft carrier Illustrious in the Mediterranean, en route to replace HMS Invincible in the Gulf.

Meanwhile Mr Richardson said Washington would support a proposal by the UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, to allow Iraq to increase its oil sales under the oil-for-food deal from $2 billion to $5.2 billion to "to prevent further deterioration in humanitarian conditions".

Chris Morris in Ankara adds: A high-level US delegation attempted to drum up support in Ankara this week for Washington's campaign against Baghdad. The vice-chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff, General Joseph Ralston, said there had been no formal request to use Incirlik air base in southern Turkey if military action against Iraq goes ahead.

The delegates were sounding out opinion from their Turkish counterparts — and hoping for a positive response. US and British planes are already stationed at Incirlik, near the Mediterranean coast. The base is the headquarters of Operation Northern Watch, which patrols Kurdish areas of northern Iraq. A UN no-fly zone prevents the Iraqi air force from operating in the region.

Volunteers training to defend Iraq against US attack PHOTO: KARIM SAHIB

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Analysis, page 13
Washington Post, page 15

Bribes verdict prompts lottery crisis

Kamal Ahmed

BRITAIN'S National Lottery faced a crisis this week after a director of the company that runs it was found by the High Court to have tried to bribe Richard Branson, head of the Virgin group. Guy Snowden, the chairman and chief executive of G-Tech, immediately resigned as a director of lottery operator Camelot.

Damages of £100,000 and costs of £3 million were awarded against Mr Snowden and G-Tech after a libel case jury found in Mr Branson's favour. Mr Snowden's disgrace represented a huge embarrassment to Camelot and immediately revived questions about the future of Peter Davis, the lottery's regulator. Mr Davis reacted sharply to the verdict by delivering an ultimatum to Camelot to sever all links with Mr Snowden within 24 hours.

But Mr Davis, the director general of Oflot, found himself the target of strong criticism from Mr Branson for his role in originally agreeing that Mr Snowden and G-Tech were fit and proper to participate in the lottery.

"During the course of the trial it emerged that Mr Davis, who awarded the lottery to G-Tech and Camelot, had serious reservations from day one," Mr Branson said. "Camelot should never have been allowed to pass the probity test with G-Tech as shareholders. G-Tech has no place in our lottery, and Chris Smith, the Secretary of State, should take appropriate steps to restore the confidence of the British public."

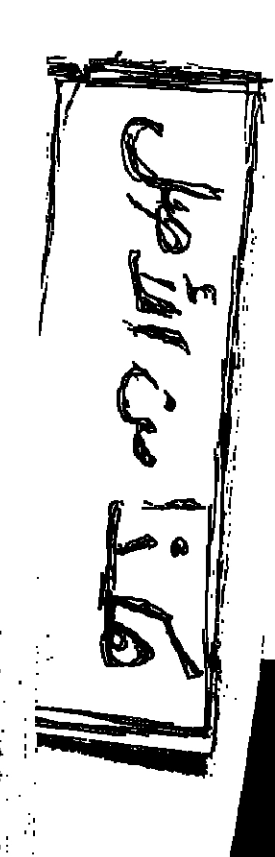
The Government has demanded an inquiry by the director general into how Mr Snowden's bribery attempt — to try to get Mr Branson to withdraw his rival application to run the lottery — surfaced only two years after they were originally made.

The allegations came to light on a BBC Panorama programme in December 1995. Mr Branson told the programme that during a lunch at his house in 1993 Mr Snowden had said to him: "In what way can we help you, Richard? I mean what can we do for you personally." Mr Branson said that he was shocked, and alleged Mr Snowden continued: "Everybody needs something."

After the court case, Mr Branson said: "It has emerged from this case that those running the lottery are extracting £1 billion in profit . . . both as shareholders and suppliers to it. That is £1 billion that could have gone to charity."

Mr Branson had sued Mr Snowden and G-Tech for saying that his allegations about the bribe attempt were untrue, Mr Snowden had counter-sued Mr Branson for making the allegations.

Austria	AS30	Malta	60c
Belgium	BF80	Netherlands	G 5
Denmark	DK17	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 14	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 500	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,500	Switzerland	SF 3.80



Clinton's latest failure compounds US follies

WELL, then, it would seem both the United States and its leader are ruled by dicks (Clinton takes flight to his accusers, February 1). The latest revelations of Bill Clinton's infidelities push all the wrong buttons. If ever a president deserved a medal for opportunities lost, it is Clinton.

I nominate him on three recent counts:
1) Failure at Kyoto to own up to the economic rape and pillage not only of nations but of the environment as well. Rather than shine as a beacon among nations as it might, the US remains intransigently rooted in greed.
2) Failure to support the landmines treaty, and the audacity to ask for special treatment to do so.
3) Permitting Binyamin Netanyahu to derail the Middle East peace process last year, claiming "it's a problem that must be settled by the participants", then executing a U-turn resulting in the Israeli prime minister being seated next to the president in the White House recently.

Being an American these days is a schizophrenic job, splitting my emotions between awe and admiration for a political system unparalleled in its offering of rights and freedoms, and utter shame and disgust at the venal illiberality of those who make a gutter of her institutions.
Eric Stewart,
Kahoku, Japan

IT SEEMS rather suspicious that in the new Clinton sex scandal many of the protagonists had links to the Bush administration. Linda Tripp, who supposedly taped Monica Lewinsky's "confession" of having an affair with Clinton, worked in the Bush White House. As did Kenneth Starr, who is investigating Whitewater and now seems to be investigating this latest "scandal". Is this a case of Bush wanting revenge for his defeat in 1992, or is it a tactic to weaken the Democrats for the election in 2000? Let's not forget that George Bush Jnr, currently governor of Texas, is regarded as a Republican front-runner for the White House.
Ken Cotterill,
Mareeba, Queensland, Australia

COMPARISON between Theodore Roosevelt and Clinton may work (Clinton addresses his presidential legacy, January 25), since Clinton speaks softly. But he does tend to carry his "big stick" in quite a different manner.
Chet Gottfried,
Holbrook, New York, USA

I READ Barbara Ehrenreich's article with amusement (How Bill screwed his generation, February 1). She writes that Mr and Mrs Clinton answered the Gennifer Flowers charges with "sappy twitterings". Actually, they answered the charges by proclaiming them lies, and engaging in a vile campaign of character assassination. As we now know, the charges were true.

Ms Ehrenreich seeks to engage our attention with the great scholastic pursuit of unmasking what this is all really about. It is, in her view, a culture war joined by the forces of sexual repression. As Sigmund Freud would have it, sometimes a cigar is just a cigar — and sometimes perjury, witness tampering, obstruction of justice, and conspiracy to suborn perjury are just what they proclaim to be.

Of course, were I a supporter of Clinton, I too would no doubt wish to change the subject under discussion to that of sex.
R W Newell,
Indialantic, Florida, USA

Suharto given an easy ride

WHILE rightfully calling for the removal of President Suharto for the sake of Indonesia's future, Le Monde presents a false picture of his relationship to the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Indonesians in 1965-66 (Indonesia needs new leadership, February 28). Far from binding the nation's wounds after an inexplicable "bloodbath", it is likely that the then major-general was the single individual most responsible for that slaughter.

The Indonesian army's involvement in the killings was directed by the Kopkamtib (Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order) under the leadership of Major-General Suharto.
Geoff Mullen,
McMahons Point, NSW, Australia

IN THE current discussions about financial aid to Indonesia, I am disappointed that no mention has been made of the continuing genocide in East Timor. Given Indonesia's need for aid and the unusually high level of opposition to President Suharto's rule, the West probably has more leverage with the Indonesian government now than it has had, or will have, in a long time.

The slaughter in East Timor has exacted a toll on the indigenous population proportionately greater than that to Cambodia's people by the Khmer Rouge, and I am ashamed that the West should have ignored it for so long. I believe it is time to act.
Dominic Rossi,
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

BRITAIN'S political involvement in bailing out Indonesia from its economic crisis depends on which Indonesia is being referred to: the Orde Baru (New Order) regime or the common folk?

Professor Tornquist of Oslo University and others have pointed out that the reason the Indonesian crisis appears to be a "financial black hole" is because of its unresolved political crisis, which can only be overcome by the formation of representative political institutions conferring legitimate government and a mandate to take economic decisions for the common good — which took Western nations generations to evolve.

Ultimately, the politics will have to be decided by the Indonesians themselves, but a quick and easy solution seems unlikely.
Adam Bogacki,
Sydney, Australia

Refugees are not illegal immigrants

YOUR article on the Schengen regime (Kurdish exodus rattles Europe, January 11) rightly highlights the sorry state of European Union immigration policies, paralysed by fear, confusion and lack of vision.

The principle of refugee protection represents the first victim of this deepening policy morass. Although the majority of asylum-seekers — including Kurds — continue to arrive from countries characterised by violence and/or human rights abuse, they are increasingly presented by politicians and the media as illegal immigrants, bogus asylum-seekers or abusers of our systems. This serves to reduce public opposition to restrictive measures.

The article, unfortunately, does nothing to counter the confusion and misinformation that suffuse this policy area. The term "refugee" is not synonymous with "illegal immigrant". We would do well to remember that refugee protection is a human rights issue that we downgrade at our peril.
Sarah Collinson,
University of Reading, Berkshire

MARTIN WALKER quite correctly says that the record of the Turkish government is far from being resplendent on human rights and in its treatment of the Kurdish minority (Continent basks in splendid isolation, January 18).

We could add that, since 1974, Turkish troops have been illegally occupying 37 per cent of Cyprus and have indulged in "ethnic cleansing". That is, 200,000 Cypriots were forced to leave their homes. More than 1,600 people are "missing" and many of them were last seen alive as prisoners of the Turkish army.

How then can a country with a government acting in such a barbaric manner be admitted to the European Union?
N La Hovary,
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Bad spellers of the world untie

I WAS sorry to see you giving space to Bernard Richard's prejudices (Don spells out students' inadequacies, January 25). In more than 50 years as student, teacher and lecturer I never noticed a strong association between the ability to spell correctly and intelligence, understanding, imagination or creative ability.

I long ago came to the conclusion that a preoccupation with such trivia as the order or nature of the letters in a word denotes a pedantic mentality more concerned with conformity, convention and authority than with other, more desirable human traits.
Peter Squibb,
Vaison la Romaine, France

IT MAY not be such bad news that the accuracy of spelling has declined over recent years at Oxford university. It may instead reflect increased understanding and tolerance of dyslexia, a condition that affects one in 10 schoolchildren to some degree.

More dyslexic students, who may be gifted in other areas, have been able to enter university. In the past they would have fallen at the first hurdle. Those who can spell assume that those who cannot are either of low intelligence or poorly educated. Would Mr Richards class Einstein and Leonardo da Vinci among the "careless" and "ignorant"?
(Dr)Justine Foster,
Tibberton, Gloucestershire

Briefly

GIVEN the Arab League's chosen role to intervene whenever the interests of the Arab nation require a strong response, is it not strange that the League has not made a valiant attempt to mediate in the war between fundamentalists and secularists in Algeria?

The cruelty with which most of the 75,000 people have been massacred (over the past six years) defies belief. Shouldn't the League's preoccupation with Israel be shelved until this horrid spillage of Arab blood is brought to an end?
David Quentzel,
Englewood, New Jersey, USA

JOHN SPENCER (December 21) states that President Robert Mugabe seeks to return farmland from whites to Zimbabwean peasants. This is far from the truth. Mugabe has confiscated successful, productive, white-owned farms in order to give them to his cronies, with the predictable disastrous effects on the productivity of these farms.
(Col) Henry Spanker,
Boca Raton, Florida, USA

THE Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI), now being negotiated by the United States secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, would eliminate restrictions on international investments, prevent governments from instituting policies aimed at strengthening local economies, and allow multinational corporations to sue governments establishing new worker protections, public safety regulations or measures protecting the environment. Despite the sweeping effects of this agreement, there has been virtually no coverage by the media.
Greg Rossel,
Troy, Maine, USA

YOU report "Dewar to run for Scots PM" (January 18) and that "Mr Blair would be glad to see Mr Dewar become de facto Scottish PM". Donald Dewar cannot run for the office of Scots prime minister; he may only offer himself as a candidate for the new Scottish parliament.
W R F Cunningham,
Eijsden, The Netherlands

IN HIS obituary of the Japanese actor Toshiro Mifune (January 11), Ronald Bergan discusses his role in Kurosawa's admirable film Rashomon, and goes on to remark that the four characters' conflicting accounts of how a nobleman met his death in the woods "demonstrate the subjective nature of truth". With due respect, I think what they demonstrate is rather the human propensity to distort truth for selfish ends.
Patrick Heron,
Ely, Cambridgeshire

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Tigers stalk Sri Lanka independence day

Suzanne Goldenberg in Colombo

ON THE grounds in front of Sri Lanka's presidential secretariat, which still bears the scars of last autumn's suicide bombing, statues of the island's great patriots stride towards the sea.

Sri Lanka's progress towards independence, achieved 50 years ago this week, was a genteel affair, far removed from the mass unrest preceding Britain's withdrawal from India. But its recent history has been the bloodiest in the region; 50,000 people have died in 15 years of civil war, and recent events, including more fighting this month, have almost eclipsed excitement about Sri Lanka's jubilee.

The celebrations, attended by the Prince of Wales, were to have been a day of pomp and pageantry, with Buddhist rites and elephant processions at Kandy's Temple of the Tooth, the holiest shrine of the Sinhalese. Instead, they have highlighted the failure of President Chandrika Kumaratunga's military and political efforts to tame the enemy: Tamil Tiger separatist guerrillas.

Festivities have been scaled down because of fears for the safety of Prince Charles and the other guests, and moved from Kandy to Sri Lanka's parliament, an isolated building on a lake several kilometres from the capital.

Last weekend the government repelled an attack by the Tigers. The defence ministry said 400 Tigers and 20 soldiers died. However, such claims are often inflated — journalists are banned from the front line, ruling out independent verification of government claims.

About 1,000 soldiers have died since last May in fighting to control a 80km stretch of road. The recent flare-up was a last effort by the government to keep its promise to open the land route to Jaffna by independence day. The government had hoped the anniversary would be an opportunity for healing, a symbolic reunification of the island which for five years had been partitioned by a virtual Tamil Tiger state on the northern Jaffna peninsula.

Mrs Kumaratunga's failure to bring peace is particularly disturbing because Sri Lanka has never produced a leader so committed to reconciling the island's two main communities. She came to power in 1994 by promising negotiated peace, a prospect more remote after the breakdown of a ceasefire with the Tigers in April 1995. Since then, Mrs Kumaratunga has marginalised the guerrillas, driving them from their citadel in the Jaffna peninsula in 1996, but she has been powerless to blunt their military might. Velupillai Prabhakaran, the Tiger leader, has been confined to jungle in the north of the island, but his teenage suicide bombers can strike anywhere.

Last month they dodged scores of policemen, several roadblocks and security checks to set off a bomb at the Temple of the Tooth, killing 16 people. Even for Sri Lanka, which has learned to shrug off regular bombings in a capital 300km from the front line, the attack on the shrine that symbolises Sinhalese identity, at a moment when the security forces were supposed to be especially vigilant, was too much to bear.

After years of promising even to "talk to the devil" to secure peace, Mrs Kumaratunga announced a ban on the Tigers, ruling out talks. The demonisation of the guerrillas was complete. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, from Colombo's Centre for Policy Alternatives, said: "It would be unthinkable for the government to negotiate with a group that has attacked the holy of holies, the Temple of the Tooth."

Mrs Kumaratunga's fiat came a day after the first local elections in Jaffna for 15 years produced city councils of moderate Tamil politicians and militants who have returned to the government fold. The vote was another attempt by the government to neutralise the Tigers as a political force. But few in Jaffna believe peace is possible without the Tigers' participation.

Until the outrage at Kandy can be forgiven, Mrs Kumaratunga is likely to back away from plans for an early referendum on her constitutional package.

● The investiture of science fiction writer Arthur C Clarke as a British knight has been postponed after sexual allegations in a British newspaper. Prince Charles was due to dub Sir Arthur, aged 80, in Colombo during his four-day visit to Sri Lanka, but St James's Palace confirmed that the investiture had been postponed at the writer's request.

100 die in Kenya clashes

Lucy Hannan in Laikipia

KENYA'S parliament was expected to meet on Tuesday for the first time since December's elections, but opposition members threatened to disrupt proceedings in protest at ethnic killings in which more than 100 people have died.

The new assembly sees the ruling Kenyan Africa National Union (Kanu) with its slimmest majority yet. Widespread disruption could bring parliamentary business to a standstill. Kanu has 113 seats to the combined opposition's 109, but already signs are emerging of rifts in the nine-party opposition camp.

A group of leading opposition politicians said they would disrupt Tuesday's largely ceremonial parliamentary session to protest against the wave of ethnic killings that has rocked the country. They called for a stay-at-home strike by Nairobi workers on Wednesday.

Meanwhile political clashes in the Rift Valley province are spreading. More than 50 people have died in Laikipia, where the violence began, and more victims have been found northwest of the regional capital, Nakuru. No official death toll in the affected area has been given, but bodies continue to be found. Thousands of people have been displaced near Nakuru, in Njoro, Ndeffo and Mau Narok in recent days.

Last week many women and children fled the area, and thousands of people gathered in church buildings, schools and market places. Armed with machetes, clubs and arrows, vigilante groups patrolled the roadside, watching raiders moving through the hills burning and looting deserted homesteads.

The churches are leading the searches for the dead and missing. Some church leaders claim that President Daniel arap Moi's government is punishing communities that voted against him in the general election.

Last week Catholic leaders accused the government of complicity in the killings. Bishop Peter Kairo said he had been forced to watch helplessly as security personnel stood by: "We could not help but conclude government conspiracy and blessing for what is going on."

Local officials have blamed the killings on criminals and cattle rustlers. The government has rejected accusations by the churches and opposition leaders that it is behind the violence.



A priest blesses with holy water the coffins of 19 Kikuyu tribesmen, killed in ethnic violence, at a funeral service in Sipili, 160km north of Nairobi PHOTO: JEAN-MARC BOUJU

Plague returns, page 27

Clinton backers deflect scrutiny to Starr

Martin Kettle in Washington

AFTER allegations of a sexual affair whipped up a storm that seemed to threaten Bill Clinton's presidency, the clouds are gathering over his tormenter-in-chief, the independent counsel Kenneth Starr.

With public opinion hardening against his role, Mr Starr and his office are increasingly seen as the problem rather than the solution. Calls for reform of the independent counsel system are growing louder.

Mr Starr made a rare public comment on Monday on investigations into whether Mr Clinton put pressure on Monica Lewinsky, a young White House intern, to lie about the alleged affair. He told CNN: "We're moving with good speed." His office was "trying to assemble the facts and get to the truth as quickly as we can".

However, with negotiations with Ms Lewinsky's lawyers seemingly stalled, Mr Starr is finding it increasingly hard to overcome the public perception that he has spent $30 million of public money pursuing a frequently petty series of politically-motivated vendettas against Mr Clinton. A recent opinion poll found that a majority of almost two to one thinks he has gone too far in his pursuit of the president.

Mr Clinton's most partisan supporters see Mr Starr as a conservative activist given free rein to seize on any and every allegation and use it against the president, placing him at the centre of the "vast, rightwing conspiracy" of which Hillary Clinton complained last week.

These claims seemed to gain credence last week when Mr Starr subpoenaed Robert Weiner — press spokesman for the drugs "tsar", General Barry McCaffrey — for making phone calls attacking the former Pentagon official Linda Tripp, who is one of Mr Starr's key witnesses.

● President Clinton this week triumphantly proclaimed an end to the era of huge US budget deficits as he unveiled a $1.73 trillion budget for 1999 with a projected $9.5 billion surplus, the first appearance of a budget surplus in 30 years.

Flesh wound, page 6
Hillary's defence, page 16

The Week

AT LEAST 50 people were killed or wounded in fierce clashes in eastern Lebanon between followers of the radical Shia cleric Sheikh Sobhi Tufaili and the Lebanese army.

JAPAN'S finance minister, Hiroshi Mitsuzuka, resigned, shouldering responsibility for a bribery scandal that has hampered the government's efforts to revive the economy.
Washington Post, page 15

A JUDGE in India sentenced 26 people to death on charges of conspiring to assassinate the former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, a federal prosecutor said.

THE Ethiopian government has arrested 14 newspaper editors in recent weeks in what the country's journalists' association described as the latest campaign of harassment and intimidation.

THE Nobel peace laureate Jose Horta appealed to the United Nations to send urgent relief to the Indonesian territory of East Timor where thousands of people are facing starvation because of drought.

ALFREDO ASTIZ, an officer in Argentina's "dirty war" who provoked outrage recently by defending the horrors of the 1970s dictatorship, was stripped of his rank of retired captain, his uniform and his navy pension.

THE former Norwegian prime minister Gro Harlem Brundtland was nominated director-general of the World Health Organisation by its executive board. The full World Health Assembly, attended by all 191 member states, will vote on the board's decision when it meets in May.

TRINIDAD'S government plans to deny prisoners on Death Row access to two key appeal courts in an attempt to speed up hangings, the attorney-general, Ramesh Maharaj, said.

A FIRE two years ago that gutted the Paris headquarters of Crédit Lyonnais, the French state-owned bank now mired in scandals and more than 40 different judicial inquiries, was started deliberately, investigators said.

A GUNMAN from the Basque separatist group ETA shot dead a local politician from Spain's ruling Popular party and his wife in Seville. Alberto Jiménez was the fourth town councillor killed by ETA since last July, but the first outside the Basque Country.

KARLA FAYE TUCKER, who has spent 13 years on Death Row, was set to make history as the first woman to be executed in Texas since the US Civil war.

'Poets detained' in China crackdown

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

A COTERIE of amateur poets has been detained by police in southwestern China, a Hong Kong-based dissident group said last weekend. The reported crackdown follows a flurry of activity in recent weeks by China's fragmented and previously dormant dissident movement.

The detained writers were planning to launch an independent journal to promote a renaissance of a literary scene stunted by censorship and coarsened by the raw consumerism of China's capitalist-style markets.

Authorities made no comment on the reported detentions in Guizhou province, one of China's poorest regions but known for its relatively bold publishing industry.

Beijing instead concentrated on attacking a new United States human rights survey. "Obviously, concern by the American side about China's human rights question is only an excuse, the true intent of which is to interfere in China's internal affairs," the official Xinhua news agency quoted a foreign ministry spokesman as saying.

The US state department survey is far milder in its criticism than in the past. While complaining of serious abuses, it reported some progress, a judgment influenced as much by improved Sino-US relations as by small signs of greater tolerance. President Jiang Zemin visited Washington last November and is expected to receive President Bill Clinton as early as April.

The Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement, a small Hong Kong group with a mixed record for accuracy, named the detained poets as Wu Ruohai, Xiong Jinren, Ma Zhe and Ma Qiang. It said they were picked up last week. Mr Wu is said to have been previously jailed for three years for involvement in democracy protests in 1989.

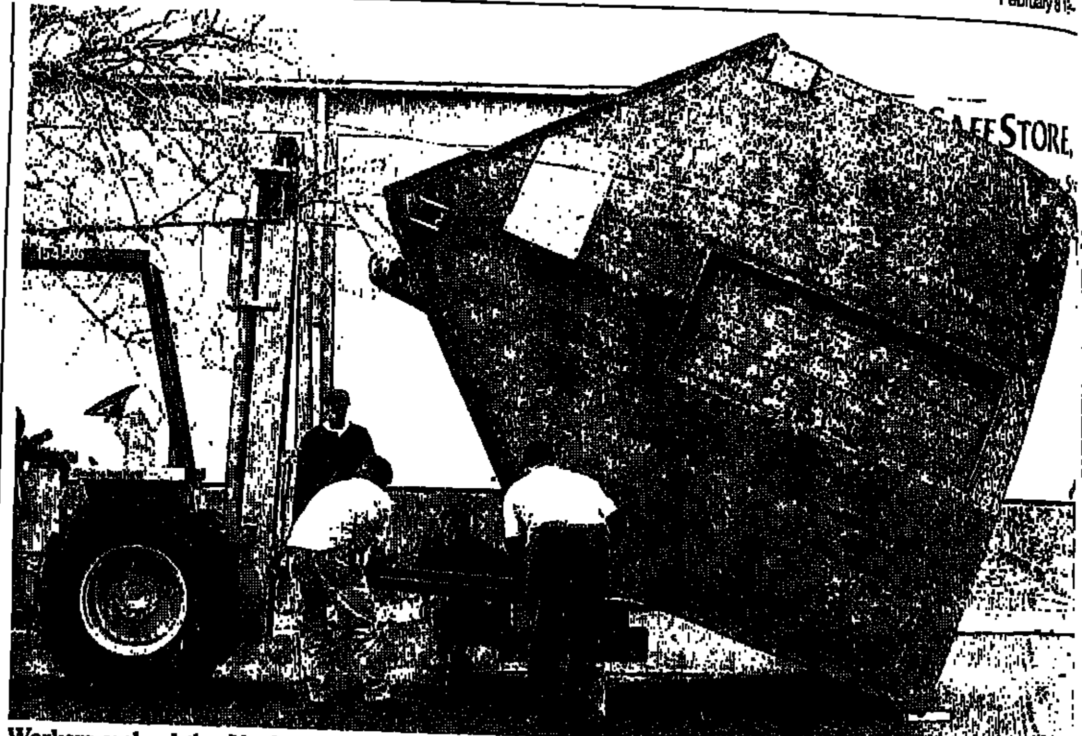
The Hong Kong group also reported that authorities had paroled veteran dissident Zhang Xiaoxu, an engineer sentenced to 15 years for his role in the 1989 protests. Authorities in the coastal city of Qingdao freed Mr Zhang in gratitude for "a deed of major merit" — repairing the prison's telephone system.

China's tiny dissident community has been emboldened in recent weeks by a series of calls for greater openness, some from within the Communist Party itself. Hu Jiwei, a former editor of the People's Daily, published an article in Hong Kong criticising what he called a "patriarchal feudal" system of power. Li Ruihuan, the most liberal member of the politburo, has also spoken up, but usually in code.

In an attempt to decapitate any revived dissident movement and also relieve foreign criticism, Beijing sent the country's best-known democracy activist, Wei Jingsheng, into exile in the US last year. Chinese leaders worry that sparks of criticism could ignite unrest among a growing army of unemployed workers.

John Gittings adds: China has adopted a law allowing execution by lethal injection, Amnesty International said in a report last week. At least 24 lethal injections were noted in the Chinese press last year, but not all are reported.

Amnesty argues that lethal injection — which does not damage key organs — may be preferred because it facilitates transplants. Because it is a simple procedure it may also encourage wider application of the death penalty.



Workers unload the Unabomber's one-roomed shack on its arrival in California after its long journey from the forests of Montana. Theodore Kaczynski's residence in it was to have been used as evidence of his disturbed mental state but his plea bargain meant that no trial took place PHOTO: RICH PEDRONCELLI

France embarks on risky shutdown of reactor

Paul Webster in Paris

THE French government's decision on Monday to dismantle the $9.8 billion Superphénix fast-breeder power plant at Creys-Malville, near the Swiss border, could lead to one of the most dangerous nuclear projects of the century.

The closure of the 1,240 megawatt reactor, which has produced only six months of electricity in 12 years of operation, is considered potentially more dangerous than its construction because no plan was drawn up to take it out of service.

The Green movement had demanded the plant's dismantling as a condition of its joining the leftwing government coalition in June. But the Greens' leader and environment minister, Dominique Voynet, said she was shocked to discover that no contingency programme existed to shut down a reactor containing five tonnes of plutonium and 5,000 tonnes of volatile radioactive liquid sodium.

The Superphénix, which was intended to produce more fuel than it consumed, will take at least 10 years to dismantle. The economy minister, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, said after a ministerial meeting that the project would begin in 2005 and would cost 10.6 billion francs ($1.8 billion) to complete.

At the same meeting, ministers decided to restart an older, smaller Phénix fast reactor, to give France's Atomic Energy Commission the chance to carry on research into radioactive waste management. They also agreed to allocate 500 million francs for research into renewable energies.

British, American and Russian scientists, who have been involved in running down small fast-breeder plants, will be asked for advice on the Superphénix.

While the French state electricity service claims important lessons have been learnt from the power plant, Superphénix is widely seen as the worst engineering setback that France has suffered this century. Hurriedly designed during the 1970s oil crisis, it suffered repeated breakdowns and was rarely connected to the national grid for more than a few weeks at a time.

Arafat spurns Israeli withdrawal plan

Julian Borger

THE Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, last weekend rejected a plan for a further limited Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, but the United States secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, called his response "hasty" and asked him to reconsider, according to Palestinian sources.

In talks on the West Bank, Ms Albright had asked Mr Arafat to respond to a plan that would turn over a further 10 per cent of the West Bank to Palestinian control in three phases. Ms Albright herself reported little progress after talks with Mr Arafat and with the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu.

Ms Albright said both sides would send envoys to Washington next week. The impasse is seen as damaging regional US interests.

Mr Arafat's rejection of the proposal could signal a possibly fatal setback to the personal peace initiative that President Clinton launched in Washington last month. In separate talks with Mr Arafat and Mr Netanyahu in Washington, Mr Clinton suggested that the next troop withdrawal should be in three stages, the second and third contingent on Palestinian fulfilment of a set of conditions.

But asked last week if he agreed to a staggered withdrawal, Mr Arafat told journalists: "Definitely not." Later the Palestinian cabinet issued a statement rejecting Mr Netanyahu's withdrawal offer, describing it as "partial and insignificant", and calling on Palestinians to start "peaceful demonstrations" against Israel.

The Israeli government accepts a phased withdrawal, but is spurning the US demand that it vacates more than 10 per cent of the West Bank. The Palestinians want a minimum of 30 per cent.

Mr Arafat warned Mr Clinton that he would resign if the US kept pressuring him to accept Israeli demands, a senior Palestinian official said. "He told President Clinton, 'If Israel continues to avoid implementing the agreements, and the United States continues to put pressure on me, I will just go back home and tell my people there is no peace process and I resign'," said the official, who was at their meeting in Washington.

Before her trip to the Middle East, Ms Albright had said that the Israeli and Palestinian leaders were being inflexible and reluctant to take key decisions. She added that despite his saying he would "definitely not" accept a phrased withdrawal from the West Bank, she had "every reason to believe" that Mr Arafat was interested in Mr Clinton's proposals.

Mr Arafat has just completed a tour of Arab states and last week met Tony Blair to discuss Europe's position. Mr Blair, according to an interview in the London-based Arabic newspaper al-Hayat, seemed to back the Palestinian demand for the removal of more troops than Israel has so far agreed to. He said: "These redeployments need to be timely, substantial and credible and . . . implemented without preconditions."

He said that the continued building of new settlements was illegal . . . but he also appealed for a "maximum effort in combating terrorism" on the Palestinian side.

The interview appeared to entrench two long-standing differences between British and US policy. British diplomats have disagreed with Washington's suggestion of tying withdrawals to preconditions, and have been less reticent in condemning Israel's expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

Belgian police 'incompetent'

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE Belgian paedophile ring uncovered 18 months ago escaped detection for so long because of endemic police incompetence, a parliamentary report says.

The report, leaked to a Belgian news agency before its official presentation to parliament next week, scotches widespread rumours that the gang, led by Marc Dutroux, a builder from Charleroi, must have had backing from political or police contacts. It blames low-level corruption and the chaotic police investigation for the time taken to uncover and break up the gang.

The finding was criticised by Gino Russo, whose eight-year-old daughter Melissa was kidnapped in 1995 and left to starve to death in a cellar at Dutroux's house. The bodies of Melissa and her best friend, Julie Lejeune, also aged eight, were found buried in Dutroux's garden in August 1996.

Mr Russo said: "I don't believe the report's conclusions . . . If [the gang] didn't have protection that makes it 100 times worse." The leak had been orchestrated to prepare Belgians for its findings before publication — and also to protect those in authority, he claimed.

The parliamentary inquiry had been set up to investigate whether the paedophiles had received high-level protection. Its report found no evidence of that, but it repeats criticisms of the police search for Julie and Melissa made in a parliamentary report last year, for which it blames low-level officers.

At the time of the kidnappings, officers had Dutroux's house under surveillance and searched it three times while the girls were still alive.

Police received tip-offs about the activities of Dutroux, a convicted sex offender, two years before the girls were kidnapped, but did nothing. Rival police forces refused to share information and, at least once, tried to mislead colleagues.

So incompetent was the investigation that many Belgians, shocked by the corruption of the system and familiar with the discreetly informal workings of the establishment, were convinced that Dutroux, who is awaiting trial, must have enjoyed protection.

The Belgian newspaper Le Soir said on Monday: "It is serious and insufferable. And perhaps it is even more pernicious that Dutroux did not have protection by an identified personality. That would have been a cyst which could have been cut out fairly easily, but this is a cancer which has to be treated carefully, and who knows whether the illness is malignant and perhaps incurable?"

War crimes that the world ignores

COMMENT
Victoria Brittain

ANOTHER old man is to be put on trial for war crimes committed in Europe 50 years ago, and Austria — like France, Italy, Poland and the United States — will have a new name through which to relive history.

Last week Italians said they wanted to extradite Wilhelm Schubernig, aged 83, from Austria. They believe he, like Erich Priebke, was involved in the slaughter of 335 civilians in the Ardeatine caves in 1944.

Maurice Papon's trial in France, the longest-running saga of them all, is set to run until March at astronomical cost.

And the US last week stripped Bronislaw Hajda, aged 73, of his citizenship after he was found to have taken part in a massacre of up to 700 prisoners at Treblinka.

Such commitment of time and money to old war crimes in Europe, and the lack of interest in recent, even current, war crimes in Africa is hypocritical.

Last month the Angolan air force intercepted a South African cargo plane carrying building materials and generators to Unita-occupied areas of Angola. The German pilot, Peter Bitzer, admitted that he had flown to numerous places in Angola with weapons for the Unita leader, Jonas Savimbi, in the last two years.

Savimbi has decades of war crimes under his belt and should have been indicted years ago instead of being made respectable by the international community — notably the United Nations and the US.

Since losing the 1994 election, Savimbi has wreaked more havoc than South Africa did in 15 years of clandestine war. The CIA spent millions of dollars over 20 years trying to crush Angola's MPLA government. No one will ever be brought to book for these war crimes.

Even worse is the current situation in Rwanda, where those responsible for the genocide of a million people in 1994 are again organising the killings of civilians and soldiers — 270 in one recent attack. Inflammatory tracts are circulating in the northeast of the country, inciting the majority Hutu population to rise up and start killing again.

The words fall on fertile ground in the northeast. Many soldiers recruited there by the former president, Juvenal Habyarimana, later led the genocide. They then fought for Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire (now Congo), and are currently heading cross-border raids into Rwanda from Congo, or linking with the Hutu groups destabilising neighbouring Burundi.

More than a million Rwandan refugees have returned from camps in Congo and Tanzania where they spent two years under the protection of humanitarian agencies while their leaders planned another genocide. The networks that ran those camps under the nose of the UN are now trying to reassert their control.

Rwanda has been badly served by the international community: the UN tribunal in Arusha is feeble and no trial has been concluded; both Belgium and France helped create the conditions for the genocide.

Outsiders owe Rwanda the resources to rebuild its own judicial process so that the 120,000 people in prison can be swiftly dealt with and the cycle of impunity broken. Money would be better spent on this than on elderly European war criminals who can no longer do anyone any harm.

Brussels risks war with Kohl

Martin Walker in Brussels

IN AN ACT of calculated defiance against Germany, competition officials from Brussels were expected to begin price-fixing investigations against Mercedes and Opel this week. Volkswagen has just been hit with a $114 million fine after a similar inquiry.

The move follows a decision by the European Commission to call in a German television and telecoms merger for "deeper investigation", despite Chancellor Helmut Kohl's personal demand that it be approved.

"There will be war between the Commission and Germany," Mr Kohl told the Commission president, Jacques Santer, in a phone call last month, the German news weekly Focus reports.

Mr Kohl has taken a personal interest in the blocked scheme by Deutsche Telekom and two German media giants, Bertelsmann and Kirch, to set up with Austria and Switzerland what they plan to be Europe's main digital pay-television network.

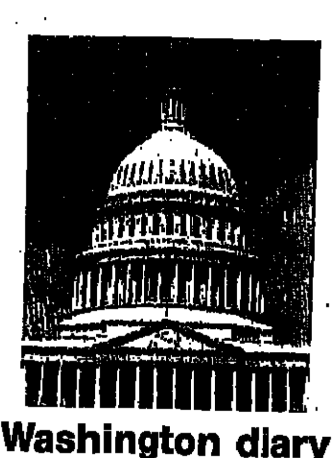
At almost every turn he finds himself running into the kind of trouble with Europe that used to be a British speciality. Even when Germany said it wanted sport excluded from the tough Brussels antitrust regime, the Belgian socialist commissioner Karel Van Miert insisted the rules must be followed.

There is worse to come. The Commission is planning action against Mercedes and Opel for reportedly discouraging non-German distributors from selling cars more cheaply to German customers who travel in search of bargains.

"What you are really seeing may be healthy in a way. It shows Germany becoming a normal country, using the Commission as a scapegoat just like other member states have done," suggests one Commission official. "Unification and the passing of the wartime generation means Germans feel less need always to be the nice guy of Europe."

As the man in charge of competition rules, Mr Van Miert has become the main target of German wrath. But his office has the figures to fend off German claims of bias. Year after year, they have blocked more state aid in France or Italy.

Clinton recovers from flesh wound



Washington diary

Martin Kettle

IN THE first 72 hours after the United States media finally dared to print the allegations about Monica Lewinsky which, it subsequently transpired, many of them had known about for weeks, plenty of people in the White House were convinced that their time was up. Talk of the Clinton presidency in free-fall was quick and commonplace, and extended high into the administration, as the charges mounted and the poll ratings went into instant double-digit slump. No one was in any doubt that this was easily the gravest crisis that Clinton had ever faced. One White House aide called it "world war three".

In the White House, the only objective was survival, and no one could say with confidence that the objective was achievable. When Clinton, after a rocky and argumentative weekend at the White House with his advisers, finally went before the cameras on Monday last week to deny all the charges, he looked drained, close to breaking point and even near to tears. And when Hillary Clinton spoke the next morning of a vast rightwing conspiracy, she too gave voice to the fact that this was a battle for the very existence of the presidency.

And yet, less than a week later, the Clinton presidency is approved of by more Americans than at any other time in its roller-coaster history. Ten days after the start of a crisis that many believed would end with Clinton being drummed out of the White House in disgrace, seven out of 10 people think he is doing his job well and less than 20 per cent of Americans take Lewinsky's word against the president's. Amazingly, Clinton has benefited from the crisis that had once seemed certain to wound him, possibly fatally. In the White House the true believers say he has not only survived; he has triumphed.

Clinton is not out of the woods yet. The public opinion that deserted him one week and flocked back to him the next can change just as easily a third time. By absolutely denying — as he ultimately did — the allegations that he had a sexual affair with Lewinsky and then tried to get her to lie about it, Bill and Hillary embarked on a high-stakes, double-or-quits game. A piece of killer evidence, accepted in court and believed by those around him, could possibly still sink Clinton and force him into resignation. And yet even that is by no means certain.

The official "on message" explanation of the president's recovery is that Americans responded both to the smack of firm denial last week and to the voter-friendly package that Clinton unveiled in his State of the Union message. Yet, while it is true that both these events went well for Clinton, it would be a mistake to swallow this conveniently high-minded version of events uncritically. The polls show relatively little movement in the public's propensity to believe Clinton's version of events, and although this must have been the most hyped and



tension-laden State of the Union speech in memory, many fewer television viewers bothered to watch it than watched Clinton's 1993 address.

The deeper reality is that Americans decided that they wanted their president to survive. There was an indication of the changed mood facing Clinton's accusers on Friday last week, the 10th day of the crisis. It was provided by Lewinsky's friend and confidante, Linda Tripp, the Pentagon aide whose secret taping of Lewinsky is at the heart of the allegations. Clearly goaded by the strength of Clinton's political recovery and by the gradual discrediting of aspects of Lewinsky's character, Tripp broke her silence on the affair. She got her lawyer to issue a statement in which she said she had overheard a conversation between Clinton and Lewinsky and had listened to tapes of the president.

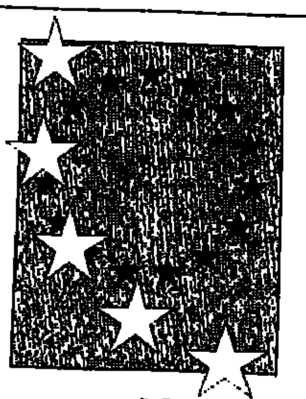
This was, in fact, a potentially lethal accusation. In a case that has often been depicted as simply a "he says, she says" conflict, Tripp was offering a rare piece of first-hand corroboration — of a kind — for Lewinsky's expected evidence of her affair with Clinton and of presidential pressure to deny it. She had overheard one end of a conversation with Clinton. She had talked at length to Lewinsky immediately after it finished. And she claimed to have heard other tapes with the president's voice on them. Her statement may not have been the "smoking gun" of the Lewinsky case, but it was clearly a close and outwardly plausible replica. If this crisis hinged solely on the legal case against Clinton, it was a very serious intervention.

And yet, while Tripp's statement was widely reported, it made strikingly little impact. Within those 10 days something had changed. Part of it, as Tripp clearly sensed, was that Lewinsky's credibility was under fire. Video clips of those incautious public embraces with Clinton seemed to show her as the stalker not the president's prey. Other damaging pieces of character evidence, of which the most important was the revelation that she had bedded her drama teacher for five years even while she was engaged with Clinton, mounted against her.

The significant shift was that in some unquantifiable but perceptible way the American people decided it didn't matter enough for Clinton to have to go. They may not have voted for Clinton. They may not greatly admire his character. They may not be sure who Kenneth Starr is, or what a special prosecutor or a grand jury are, and they may be genuinely unsure where the truth ultimately resides. But they do know who's the president, and they know that they want a presidency that is not so vulnerable to an institutionalised inquisition as this one became. That is why they have rallied round Clinton, and it is why what was nearly a private catastrophe has become, to universal surprise and with unknowable consequences, almost a public apotheosis.

Hugo Young, page 12
Washington Post, page 16

Fledgling euro seeks to pile on the pounds



Europe this week

Martin Walker

THE DEDUCTIVE talents of Sherlock Holmes are not required to understand why three top European officials returned last week to pick over the bones of an issue already supposed to have been settled. Britain is not joining the new single currency in the first wave, nor for the life of the current UK parliament, but will sign up as soon as the nation gives its assent after that. Like it or not, that is the Government's position.

So it was interesting that European commissioners should launch last week what looked like a concerted campaign to re-open the argument, warning that Britain's hopes of influencing the future of Europe and its status in the Group of Seven and other important international bodies are at risk unless it joins the single currency soon. The European Commission president, Jacques Santer, and British commissioner Sir Leon Brittan visited London to deliver separate warnings that the UK risked missing the boat. But the most portentous threat came, characteristically, from the French monetary commissioner, Yves-Thibault de Silguy.

Mr de Silguy's warning came in an exchange with MEPs in the European Parliament, where he said, "There is no need to change the statutes of the International Monetary Fund to chase out all EU member states and impose the European Union". But the G7 was different, he went on, and that was where "the real decisions are made".

"I would not like these decisions to be made by a limited number of member states on behalf of the European Union, and the other member states," he said. "Personally I think that would be unacceptable".

French and, to a lesser extent, German officials have for some months been saying in private that G7 should be replaced by a new G3, bringing together the custodians of the dollar, the yen and the euro as the real masters of the financial universe. Being sidelined from the top global club would be a humiliating prospect for Britain.

The motives behind this new campaign are simply discerned. The Europeans are coming to the conclusion that the euro could be an uncomfortably weak currency, and the current health and soundness of the British economy would bring a useful strength. There are two reasons for this. The first is Italy. The political determination of Europe's leaders to engineer a smooth launch of all 11 would-be members into the new single currency was jolted last week when Italy was told it could not count proceeds from internal gold sales in its frantic efforts to cut its budget deficit.

Eurostat, the statistical service of the EU, ruled that the "sale" of gold from one arm of the Italian state banking system to another, and the consequent tax revenues, were an internal "transaction which does not reduce the state deficit". The amount involved is a tiny 0.15 per cent of Italy's gross domestic product. But it was sufficient to raise Italy's estimated budget deficit to within an ace of the 3 per cent deficit threshold. More ominously, it drew attention again to the various other ploys Italy has devised to meet the criteria to join the euro.

They include a special one-off euro-tax, which raised more than $3 billion with the promise that most of it would be returned to taxpayers later. Then companies had to pay severance taxes in advance on workers who were retiring, and another $5.6 billion was saved on severance pay by blocking all early retirement from the public sector for a year. These heroic efforts massaged the budget deficit down by some $12 billion to less than 3 per cent. But there have been sharp warnings from the markets that they do not see Italy's budget cuts as sustainable.

Moreover neither the cuts nor the ploys have succeeded in reducing Italy's huge national debt, which at 122 per cent of GDP is more than double the target set by the Maastricht treaty for countries wanting to join the single currency. Some economists, such as Oxford's Professor Walter Eltis, are warning that by avoiding a political crisis with Italy this year, Europe is simply putting off an economic crisis for the euro until the markets speculate against the lira next year.

The second explanation for the new courting of Britain is that the EC has been made nervous by the tremors of the Asian financial crisis now hitting German banks. The Deutschebank made a provision of almost $800 million for bad Asian loans last week, and Commerzbank and Dresdnerbank, along with France's long-troubled Crédit Lyonnais, are also uncomfortably exposed. Europe's banks have a total loan exposure of more than $360 billion in Asia, more than Japanese and US banks combined. So whatever European officials may protest about the "belt of confidence" that guards Europe from the Asian collapse, some worry is understandable.

Europe is surrounded by troubles. The slaughter in Algeria and the stalling of the Middle East peace process combine with the crisis of relations with Turkey to trouble the EU's southern flank. To the east, the emergent economies of eastern and central Europe have been hurt by the Asian crisis. Russia's rouble and its stock market have dropped by 25 per cent. With alarms from the south and east, from a distant Asia and a febrile Washington, the stage has been set for a stormy launch for the great gamble of the euro. No wonder they want the strong pound to join and buttress its birth.

Shell re-uses Brent Spar platform

Paul Brown

BRENT Spar, the giant disused oil storage platform that became a battleground for environmentalists, is to be cut up and found new life as a quayside for ferries on the Norwegian coast.

Shell announced the solution last week, more than two years after Greenpeace stirred up European public opinion to such a pitch that the oil company was forced to abandon its plan to sink the unwanted vessel in the Atlantic.

The 14,500 tonne, 130m high Brent Spar will be sliced into six sections in Erfjord, the Norwegian fjord where it has remained anchored since the attempt to dump it was abandoned in June 1995. The accommodation platform will be scrapped on land but each lower section will be towed on barges to Mekjarvik near Stavanger, where they will be filled with rubble and a concrete platform put over the top. This will be used as a roll-on, roll-off ferry terminal.

The decision has cost Shell around $70 million, compared with the original cost of £4.5 million to dump the structure, and changed the way that oil companies view the disposal of the hundreds of off-shore installations due to be decommissioned.

For Greenpeace it represents a victory since re-use is better than recycling and both are better than dumping.

Shell was still keen to emphasise that the Brent Spar was a one-off exercise and it had not abandoned sea-dumping of other installations.

More than 200 ideas were suggested for solving the problem of the Brent Spar. These included using it as a casino, a hotel and a fish farm. They were narrowed down to four options, which included coastal defences in Norfolk, total scrapping on land for the steel, which was the most expensive at $78 million, and the proposal to use it as the base for a new port quay. This will cost $35 million.

In environmental terms the schemes had little to choose between them. Even sea-dumping of a clean structure was not seriously damaging. What swung Shell to the quayside idea was that re-use meant a massive saving in energy compared with building the port from scratch with new steel. In fact Mekjarvik is the real winner since it will be acquiring far higher quality steel than it could afford to buy and save itself $800,000 on the cost of the port at the same time.

For Shell it is an acceptable end to an expensive saga. The oil storage buoy installed in the Brent field in 1976 had been disused since 1991. The dumping at sea option was licensed in February 1994, but in April 1995 Greenpeace occupied the platform and a long battle began.

By June a number of European governments were protesting at the dumping and 50 Shell service stations were damaged in Germany — two fire-bombed and one raked with bullets. Shell abandoned the dumping much to the irritation of the British government.

Greenpeace did not emerge unscathed either. In September it apologised for its inaccurate claim that there were 5,550 tonnes of contaminated oil on Brent Spar. Both sides were still not friends last week as Shell made nine points on which Greenpeace had been "wrong" about the company and the Brent Spar.

Chris Rose, campaign director for Greenpeace, said it had taken two years for the company to accept what the public had told it in 1995. "Shell should accept dumping at sea is wrong in principle and unnecessary in practice," he said.



Brent Spar, anchored in Norway. It will become a ferry terminal

Kurds risk all for good life across the border

Chris Morris in Edirne, Turkey

HUDDLED together against a bitter wind, 72 Iraqi Kurds wait patiently to be released so that they can try again. "We were planning to swim across," said one of the men standing outside a police station near the Greek border. "But they found us first."

A border patrol found the Kurds on the banks of the Meric river; three had drowned. Several weeks after leaving their homes, they were in sight of the front line of the European Union. It would be foolish not to try again.

Most of the would-be migrants are young men, fed up with the constant threat of warfare in their homeland. Many come from the town of Sulamaniyah, headquarters of one of the two rival Kurdish factions that have battled for control of northern Iraq since the end of the Gulf war. Two of the three children travelling with a woman in the group lost their shoes in the river. Her house in Baghdad had been destroyed by Allied bombing and she was desperate to join her brother in Germany.

After crossing the Anatolian plain on foot, the group fell prey to smugglers who work out of cheap hotels and telephone offices in Istanbul, offering the chance of a one-way ticket to Europe.

"They brought us in a lorry to a dirt track near the border, then we had to walk to the river in the night and try to get to Greece," said Mahmoud. "We paid them about $300 each. After that it was up to us."

The Kurds are fined the equivalent of 60p and told to go home. But most will turn straight back to the border.

But these Kurds are at the bottom end of the trade in smuggling people. For $5,000, small boats will carry a passenger across to one of the Greek islands just off the Turkish coast. From there, fake documents are supplied for passage by ferry to Italy.

More than 20,000 people were caught trying to leave Turkey illegally last year. "We catch people every day," said Omer Tuzel, the police chief in Edirne. "Sometimes we see the same people time after time. It's a constant battle."

Most of the recent migrants have been Kurds from Iraq or Turkey, but people from as far as Bangladesh and Kenya have been drawn to the Istanbul underground, only to emerge blinking into the light from container crates or the engine rooms of rusty oil tankers. For every one captured, another slips through the net.

The Turkish authorities have recently stepped up efforts to stem the flow, stung by accusations from Europe of political persecution and poor border security.

"It's just a game," said the owner of a hotel raided by police. "In the past, the police have taken money from the smugglers to turn a blind eye." It is hard now to find migrants willing to talk in Istanbul.

While Turkey accuses Europe of hypocrisy in its treatment of migrants, it fails to acknowledge its own blind-spot. The war in the southeast between the Turkish security forces and the Kurdish rebel movement, the PKK, has generated its own migratory pressure. About 500,000 Turkish Kurds have fled burnt-out villages to the grim new suburbs of Istanbul in the past decade.

As rain begins to fall and the Edirne Kurds stamp their feet against the cold, 45 exhausted people are caught at the other end of the country after crossing into Turkey from the Iraqi mountains. They had each paid a smuggler $500, but still walked for seven days. Many had frostbite.

Europe can be sure that many more are on the way. "We'll keep trying until we get there," said Mahmoud. "All we want is a place to live."

In Brief

BLUNDERS in smear testing at Kent and Canterbury hospital have so far led to eight deaths from cervical cancer and resulted in 30 women being forced to undergo hysterectomies, according to a new report by the local health authority.

MORE than 20 prisons will have to be built at a cost of £2 billion to meet an expected 50 per cent rise in jail numbers over the next seven years, said Richard Tilt, the director general of the Prison Service.

IAN KAY, a murderer already serving a life sentence at Broadmoor hospital, was detained for life after admitting that he had intended to kill Peter Sutcliffe, the Yorkshire Ripper, when he stabbed him in the eyes with a pen in March last year.

GOVERNMENT figures point to a near 50 per cent drop in farm incomes last year. A Ministry of Agriculture report blamed a fall in a value of produce caused by the strong pound and cuts in compensation to farmers hit by the beef crisis.

A FIFTIES rock 'n' roll party in south London ended with a bloody street battle between rival biker gangs with two men stabbed to death and another seriously injured.

THE Secret Intelligence Service — better known as MI6 — has finally thrown off its image as a nest of macho bachelors and decided it is safe for gay men to spy for Britain.

SIX MEN, including at least four National Hunt jockeys, were arrested on suspicion of involvement in alleged horse-doping and race fixing.

NICHOLAS Payne, the director of the Royal Opera, has been appointed to run the English National Opera. His departure is is the latest in a series of blows suffered by the Royal Opera House, including a damning parliamentary report, the resignation of its chairman and board, and continuing financial problems.

THE Poet Laureate, Ted Hughes, won the Whitbread Book of the Year award for his volume, Tales From Ovid.

ANDREW MARR was sacked as editor of the Independent newspaper, sparking an exodus of senior staff who say the paper is being forced downmarket by its major shareholder, Mirror Group Newspapers. Rosie Boycott, editor of the Independent On Sunday, will become editor of both titles, making her the first woman editor of a national daily.

ROBERT McINTYRE, the first member of the Scottish National Party to become an MP, has died aged 84.

Channel rail link plans collapse

Keith Harper

EUROSTAR services could be handed back to British Rail and the public sector within three weeks after the collapse of private sector plans to build the £6 billion Channel Tunnel rail link, the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, warned in a dramatic intervention in the Commons last week.

The developers of the project, London & Continental Railways (LCR), who have been running Eurostar services for the past two years, have been unable to keep their side of the private-public sector bargain struck with John Major's government. If there is no rescue the Government would have no alternative but to let the public sector take over the Eurostar services again.

Mr Prescott said officials were ready to discuss any revised proposals to complete the agreement but added, to loud Labour cheers, "at the same time, preparations will be made for an orderly handover of the business to the public sector".

Conveniently, British Rail, which still exists, stands ready to do so. It still has expertise and has recently been recruiting key personnel in case the privatised rail industry failed to deliver. Eurostar's operating staff will remain in place to carry on the daily services from Waterloo to Paris and Brussels.

Mr Prescott told an astonished House of Commons that LCR, the developers of the 68-mile joint private-public finance scheme from London St Pancras to Folkestone, had pulled out of the project. They wanted the Government to pour in up to £3 billion of taxpayers' money to rescue the project, but Mr Prescott had refused.

Reluctantly, the Government is ready to let the project fall if no alternative private backer can be found before the end of this month.

The cash-rich privatised rail operator Railtrack signalled that it would be prepared to take up the project without needing extra money from the Treasury, but was likely to demand that in return the Government maintain its cosy regulation controls on Railtrack beyond 2001 when they are due to be reviewed.

The current Eurostar service, handed over free to LCR by the Major government to run at a profit, will continue to operate.

Mr Prescott assured the Commons that whatever happened in the next month, the "excellent international train services provided by Eurostar" would operate normally, because the company was obliged to do so under an agreement with its French and Belgian partners.

Matthew Taylor, the Liberal Democrat transport spokesman, warned: "Nationalisation of Eurostar means there is no prospect of the high-speed link being built and opens the taxpayer to uncertain future liabilities. It also calls into question the future of Eurotunnel."

Comment, page 12



Rock face . . . Emma Harridge tackles the beginners slab at the Welsh International Climbing centre, the world's biggest indoor climbing centre, in Trelewis, south Wales PHOTOGRAPH: JEFF MORGAN

Drink-drive laws to be stiffened

INCREASED police powers to stake out premises and breathalyse a member of the public without prior suspicion are included in plans to reform the drink-driving laws, published by the Government this week, *writes Keith Harper.*

The police would be able to keep watch on licensed premises where they thought there was excessive drinking. They would be allowed to maintain a surveillance for up to 48 hours if they thought considerable bouts of drinking were involved.

The Transport Minister, Gavin Strang, is asking the public for comments on a range of ideas over the next three months as the Government moves towards tightening the drink-driving laws, probably by the end of the year. Legislation is expected in the next parliamentary session.

Police are already empowered to stop and search people under the Knives Act, if they think they could be in possession of a dangerous weapon. The Government believes it could move in this direction on drink-driving cases.

Dr Strang said the Government was attracted to the idea of effectively limiting drivers to a single drink with a lower level penalty system of 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood. This would be subject to a fine instead of a ban. Drivers with more than 80mg — the current driving limit — would be subject to the usual disqualification and fine or imprisonment.

The Government's consultation document suggests two different forms of do-it-yourself tests. One would be a compulsory ignition interlock device which would prevent a car from starting if the driver was found to be over the limit after blowing into a dashboard-mounted nozzle.

The second would involve the use of cheap, disposable DIY breath tests, available from shops or pubs. They would be used on a voluntary basis by motorists to check whether they were legally able to drive the morning after a drinking session or on their way home.

The drink-driving curbs could hit rural pubs, where public transport is limited, but Dr Strang insisted that under any new legislation, somebody going out for a night could survive on two pints of ginger beer shandy and soft drinks.

He added: "I could still have a good night out on that."

Britain lags on social security spending

David Brindle

BRITAIN spends relatively little on health and social security, according to official figures published last week which call into question ministers' concerns about the rising cost of the welfare state.

The 1998 edition of Social Trends, the Government's annual compendium of social and economic statistics, puts Britain ninth of 11 European Union states ranked by expenditure on social protection benefits.

Britain is shown to spend less than half what Denmark allocates to social protection. Very little of what it does spend goes towards help for families and children — the first budget area to have borne cuts.

The findings have been underscored by comments by Chris Daykin, the government actuary, that Britain has no real problem of welfare costs by comparison with most other countries.

In an address to politicians and insurance industry experts last week, Mr Daykin said Britain's outlook was "very controlled and stable" by international standards. Barely any increase in spending would be needed to underwrite the existing system over the next seven years.

Whereas France, Germany and Italy would each need to raise spending by 3 per cent of gross domestic product to sustain their state pension schemes to 2005, Britain would need an increase of just 0.1 per cent.

"In fact, the projected contribution rates for the UK social security scheme are expected to remain more or less level right through to 2035," Mr Daykin said.

The international comparisons in Social Trends are based on data from Eurostat, the European statistical agency. Figures for Ireland, Greece, Luxembourg and Spain were unavailable.

Taking together all spending — state and private — on old age, sickness, unemployment and disability, Britain is shown to spend less than £3,000 a head annually, France almost £5,000 and Denmark almost £7,000.

The authors note: "In general, the expenditure per head of population is lowest in the more southerly countries."

When Britain's spending is broken down by category, the amount devoted to families and children is shown to be about an eighth of the combined total of expenditure on the elderly, health care and disability.

The first welfare cuts made by the Government were in benefits for lone parents. Universal child benefit is also under threat, with speculation that it may be taxed or means-tested or withdrawn in respect of over-16s.

Social Trends says social protection spending in Britain is 87 per cent of that in France — though the gap has been closing. Cautioning against drawing conclusions about the relative well-being of the British and French populations, the authors say the countries' social support systems vary widely.

"In France, general government contributions accounted for a third of receipts in 1993 compared with half in the UK. In addition, the UK occupational pension schemes have very substantial funds and are a significant source of finance."

Social protection benefits
EU comparison per head, £ 000s, 1995

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Denmark
Sweden
Germany
Austria
Finland
Netherlands
France
Belgium
UK
Italy
Portugal

Source: Eurostat

Ghost squad spying on London police

Duncan Campbell

A SECRET "ghost squad", including retired detectives, military personnel and accountants, has been investigating corruption within London's Metropolitan police for more than three years, it was disclosed last week.

Those under investigation include former chief officers and detectives believed to have used safe deposit boxes and offshore accounts to hide ill-gotten gains of sums in excess of £100,000.

A dedicated team, with surveillance and analyst skills, located away from any Metropolitan police building, has been collating evidence on up to 250 corrupt detectives, according to senior Scotland Yard sources. Trusted serving officers were included in what was described as an "invisible" team.

The existence of the team was authorised by the former and current Home Secretaries, Michael Howard and Jack Straw. The aim was to crack down on what are described as "little firms within firms".

Further action is expected in the wake of recent anti-corruption activity. The future of the Flying Squad, Scotland Yard's most famous unit, is likely to be debated.

"There are a lot of serving officers and retired officers who are fearing the knock on the door," said a senior source. Those who are the subject of the inquiry include officers or retired officers who have served in specialist and regional crime squads and the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS). Raids on the homes of former and serving officers have already been carried out.

The Yard anticipates that some of the suspect officers may use smear or disinformation tactics against the anti-corruption team investigating them. Some of the anti-corruption officers fear that bent detectives could plant drugs on them. "The opposition are not pleasant people," said a senior source. "They do not want to do 10 to 12 years inside."

No amnesties are being offered. Officers are being urged to confess, plead guilty, and have this taken into consideration by judges.

It is accepted that a number of criminal prosecutions which involve officers under suspicion may now collapse. Already one trial has been brought to an end because of the involvement of such an officer. It is also accepted that appeals against convictions where suspect officers have been involved will follow.

Retired officers under investigation include those formerly within the ranks of the Association of Chief Police Officers, which represents officers from commander level upwards. The Met has about 30 serving commanders in a force of 27,000 officers. The kind of activities being investigated are the setting up of robberies and the raiding of drug dealers.

Former detectives, including some who have made careers in the security business or the law, are also under investigation. Some of those under suspicion are experts at asset-tracing and thus are well aware of how to hide their money. Offshore arrangements are believed to have been made by officers preparing for retirement. Money may also have been hidden in safe deposit boxes.

There is a feeling that for a decade until the early 1990s the Metropolitan police took its eye off the ball as regards corruption and that, as a result, corrupt officers have felt secure.

Digital TV 'leaves poor out of picture'

Kamal Ahmed

THE BIGGEST television revolution since the advent of colour could leave Britain with millions of second-class viewers, unable to afford to buy into the digital age.

The new "television underclass" is revealed in a report by the Institute for Public Policy Research, which says that the Government must act if digital TV is to be enjoyed by those who cannot afford the essential set-top boxes.

The system, which will eventually replace the present technology, will offer a plethora of new channels, home shopping, the Internet and pay-per-view TV such as live football matches and films on demand.

The boxes, due to go on sale this year, are likely to cost about £200. The alternative is a digital TV set, which will initially cost about £1,000.

The £200 cost is already heavily subsidised by broadcasters such as Granada and BSkyB, which are launching the system. The launch has been dogged by delays because the technology is so complex and expensive.

The Government is considering phasing out the present TV signals, which are carried on analogue frequencies, over the next 10 years. After that the only way to see any channels, including BBC, commercial and satellite channels, will be with a box or digital TV set.

"There are many people who find it difficult to afford the BBC licence fee, which is just under £100," said Cristina Murroni, author of the report. "How are they going to feel about paying £200 or even more to buy the set-top box, and will they be able to afford it?"

If the Government does phase out analogue TV it will be able to sell off the frequencies it uses. Mobile telephone companies are keen to buy new frequencies in an already crowded market.

The Culture, Media and Sport Secretary, Chris Smith, told a conference organised by the institute last week that digital technology needed to be made available to all.

He said he wanted to ensure that universal access to current channels was available through digital services as soon as possible, "so as to end the current wasteful use of valuable radio spectrum on analogue terrestrial broadcasting".

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Let's be serious about Saddam

YES, Tony Blair, President Saddam is an Evil Dictator, but we knew that already. It does not get us any closer to deciding whether it is sensible to bomb Iraq. A calmer voice last weekend came from the United Nations secretary-general. It is in the UN's name that military action would be taken, so what does he have to say?

Kofi Annan is calling for more time to resolve the crisis, and with diplomacy, not force. He has also repeated his hopes that any United States action on Iraq will be undertaken only with the Security Council "on board". Mr Annan has to tread softly, but his concerns are clear: the issue of UN authority must come first. There is, as he said, total unity in the Security Council on the aims of disarming Iraq and ensuring that weapons inspections can be carried out. Indeed, this unity is the strongest argument put forward by the US and Britain for contemplating military action. Yet it does not extend to the action itself. This is more than simply an awkward detail: the British are seeking a new resolution which, while not authorising action, would provide a more convincing rationale. Can the UN Charter be sidestepped in this way?

The practical arguments against a strike remain forceful. Sir Peter de la Billière, who commanded the British forces during the Gulf war, says he shares the reservations "about using the rather blunt weapon of a single strike military force. This has never worked in history". Fears about biological seepage if a weapons facility were hit are real. Those who suffered would not be the Evil Dictator but the innocent people over whom he rules. And yes, we know too that Saddam Hussein has used chemical weapons before. In fact, Western governments turned a blind eye when he did so against the Kurds.

The question is whether the situation is so critical as to risk all the negative consequences — to the UN's authority, to the Middle East peace process, and to the people of Iraq — by launching military action now. The slightly more positive noises coming from the region last weekend have to be assessed critically. Countries such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan (though not, it seems, Egypt) are finessing their doubts: a delicate balance must be struck between maintaining regional autonomy and keeping on good terms with the world's only superpower.

We have been given a range of scenarios, from the suggestion that President Saddam is poised to launch an anthrax strike upon Tel Aviv to the more measured suggestion that he will, unless checked, acquire one day the capability to do some such thing. The most alarmist forecasts have come from Richard Butler, the chief UN weapons inspector, who has upset Security Council members before by speaking out of turn. Mr Butler issued a lame clarification of his claim to the New York Times that Iraq had enough biological material to "blow away Tel Aviv". Mr Butler should keep quiet, and his position must surely be expendable in any settlement to be reached with Iraq.

We need a much clearer picture than that given so far on the nature and time-scale of the Iraqi threat, and a calmer debate on the alternative options. Mr Annan's proposal for improvements to the oil-for-food deal with Iraq, though purporting to be unrelated, suggests a larger area for negotiation. In any case, the threat of military force has limitations in dealing with an Evil Dictator who has thrived upon war at the expense of his people before. The danger is that the threat will acquire an unstoppable momentum of its own.

Rail link bogged down in dogma

BRITAIN'S great Victorian engineers, who at one stage built most of the world's railways, must be turning in their graves at the latest bizarre twist in the never-ending soap opera of the Channel Tunnel rail link. London & Continental Railways, which is supposed to be building it, expressed surprise last week that the UK government had turned down its request for an extra $2 billion of public money to get the project under way. This is on top of the $3 billion taxpayers have already coughed up, not to mention throwing in for nothing Eurostar's entire Continental operations plus the new Waterloo Station plus masses of land around St Pancras in central London. Remember, this is a project that could have been up and running long ago if the former Conservative government had authorised British Rail's original $5.7 billion route through south London — of which only the impressive new terminal at Waterloo was actually constructed.

It was scuppered by the destructive myopia of Mrs Thatcher, who insisted it had to be built with private sector money and inserted a clause into the Channel Tunnel Act to that effect.

Even now the country seems unable to exorcise one of the real excesses of Thatcherism. For a decade the Guardian has argued that while a private sector link would be very welcome, it was unlikely that it would ever succeed. This is for the simple reason that it is difficult to see how all the external benefits of the project which accrue to the community (reduced congestion, fewer accidents, regional regeneration, less pollution, etc) could be recouped from ticket sales alone. A major infrastructural project like this can last for well over 100 years and its viability shouldn't depend on the private sector's need to earn a very high profit in a short period of time. This has long been realised by the rest of Europe, where an impressive network of high-speed trains has long since been built, including the French link from Calais to Paris and the recently opened Belgian link to Brussels. Small wonder the rest of the European Union doubts Britain's European credentials.

What should be done now? The Government should certainly give the private sector a final chance to come up with a solution during the next 30 days. The link must be built: it doesn't matter who builds it. If a co-operative solution cannot be worked out, then Tony Blair must bite the bullet and take the whole project over, not just Eurostar's existing Continental operations. An improving fiscal position would enable the Government to do this without upsetting the "golden rule" whereby government should borrow only to invest and not to fund current spending.

Labour keeps saying that investment is vital. It is. This is a major national — and European — project that will eventually pay for itself. One reason why Eurostar isn't making money is that the fast link — conceived as an integral part of the Channel Tunnel project — isn't up and running. A decade has been squandered because a simple decision turned into Dogma on Wheels. Mr Blair has the chance to practise what he preaches and invest for the long term. History will be unforgiving if he too muffs the chance.

Up from under the Crown

AUSTRALIA has now begun its debate — as promised last year by the deputy prime minister — on the Queen's position as head of state. Opening a two-week convention in Canberra on the subject, the prime minister, John Howard, made only a token effort to press his monarchist sympathies. He did not believe, he said, that the alternatives "so far canvassed" would deliver a better system. But Mr Howard also acknowledged that Australia's ties with Britain have diminished in the past 40 years. He knows that more than half the Australian public already supports a republic — a figure that rose to two-thirds in the latest poll last weekend.

Two centuries of immigration — whether forced or voluntary — that came mainly from Britain and Ireland have long ago fizzled out. Today more than half of the immigrant population (constituting one in four of the total population) was born in non-English speaking countries. Only 30 years ago, there were fewer than 40,000 non-Europeans in Australia. Now there are as many immigrants every year from China as from Britain.

The constitutional link to the Queen suffered for many Australians a fatal injury 22 years ago when the governor-general of the time, Sir John Kerr, sacked the prime minister, Gough Whitlam. It was done in the Queen's name, although she would have known nothing about it. There is still a streak of sympathy for the Queen in person — although not her family. Even Mr Howard, on taking up office, took care to explain he was swearing allegiance to the Queen — but not to "her heirs and successors". Nor can the British really complain; in the UK itself the behaviour of these same heirs and successors has given republicanism a new legitimacy.

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Bill and Tony's big Mideast adventure

Hugo Young

TONY BLAIR is Bill Clinton's friend. Beyond the 67 per cent of Americans who still think the president is doing a fine job, he's one of his only global friends. No British prime minister has been closeted longer with a president than Blair will be with Clinton this week, though any deficiency by Margaret Thatcher in that respect can only have been due to Ronald Reagan's attention-span. For Clinton, in his predicament, Blair's embrace will be part of his resurrection.

This is all very gratifying, but deeply misleading. While temporarily the bestower of a favour, Blair is more chronically destined to be the acquiescent slave. The same old story, only more so. He goes as a strong domestic leader, certainly. He sweeps the president into his aura of decency and command. The photocall will be uplifting for both men. But what is unfolding between London and Washington shows the same submissive respect by the lesser for the stronger partner as prevailed in the Reagan-Thatcher years, highlighted now by Britain's solitary, potentially catastrophic, part in a joint venture against Iraq.

The bonding began, for Blair, in domestic concerns. He was fascinated by how Clinton turned the Democrats away from what they call liberalism. The junking of old ideology was a common task, in which Clinton led the way, as Thatcher had led Reagan in the rightist revolutions of the 1980s. The politics of spin, and the supremacy of manipulation, were other priorities in which Clinton had much to teach. All that's glitzy crossed the Atlantic from west to east, in the cause of redefining the meaning of the progressive idea.

One might add to that Blair's natural affinities. Though less aggressively Anglo-Saxon than any predecessor, his cultural affiliations appear to be preponderantly American. He sees the United States as teacher in a wider sense, as witness the presence of Jack Straw, the UK Home Secretary, apparently following Michael Howard in a quest for penal lessons drawn from one of the least sophisticated penal jurisdictions in the advanced world. For all its talk about a fresh start in Europe, New Labour has shown a greater propensity to lecture than to learn from Europe in any field: another eerie echo of Mrs Thatcher.

In foreign policy, it would not be true to say that London has been completely servile. The British government has somewhat displeased Washington by its public pressure on the US to make good its huge funding debt to the United Nations. Over Bosnia, Robin Cook's notably more energetic policy on the capture of indicted war criminals not only put the Rifkind-Hurd inertia to shame but was his own initiative, goading Washington into line.

But now we have Iraq. At present, Britain stands alone beside the US in mobilising forces and getting ready to bomb. No Arab state is willing openly to support this strategy, and many of the large ones, notably Egypt and Saudi Arabia, are counselling against it. There is no consensus for action in the UN Security Council, and, though France has shown signs of qualifying her rank hostility, both Paris and Moscow are becoming very alarmed by the stance to which Washington, with Blair apparently alongside, is getting more committed by the day.

Saddam is an evil, dangerous, dreadful force at large in the Middle East, who is contemptuously defying the UN, and is developing a capacity for biological warfare that makes him a menace to the peace of the region and the world. He is a threat which the international community has failed to deal with for seven years are now in the gravest danger of being re-developed.

Renewing the bombing, however, brings with it almost as great a danger. I write as someone who defended the invasion and bombing policy before and during the Gulf war. Then there was a coherent alliance, UN-based legitimacy, and an achievable objective. On this occasion the consensus is absent and the war-aim is nowhere near clear enough: or, if clear, not seriously credible as a means to the stated end of getting rid of Saddam's military capacities and/or his entire regime. The history of bombing argues strenuously against any such convenient outcome. The danger of unleashing biological agents through scoring a direct hit is being openly discussed. Any secondary targets — indirect hits, with collateral civilian damage — invite one to suppose that it may be for the Iraqi people's own good that their country, and they themselves, should once again be bombarded.

THAT argument was used by the Foreign Office minister, Tony Lloyd, in an under-reported Commons debate last week. Since Iraqis were suffering at their brutal leader's hands, he implied, any action was justified in the attempt to neuter if not extinguish him. A perverse and chilling proposition, revealing a desperation in government thinking, trapped as Britain is by fealty to Washington.

There is only one justification for the present build-up, and the war talk that accompanies it. It is not negligible. The logic resembles that of nuclear deterrence: make a large enough threat, and the enemy should be induced to restrain himself. Rattling their smart missiles and talking big about their willingness to use them, Madeleine Albright and her British associates are hoping to force Saddam to do what he has often done before, which is to climb down just enough to resume a political argument.

But if deterrence fails, the policy itself will have failed. Make no mistake about it. Bombing will do nothing for weapons inspection, nothing for the Iraqi people, and almost certainly nothing for the Middle East.

London is not unaware of this, of course. Cook is picking his own words carefully, and plainly hoping to play for time with another Security Council resolution, which the US does not entirely want. The question is: what will happen if the Council remains divided, and Washington insists on military action? One would like to imagine that Blair will this week use his window of Clintonian gratitude by insisting on the folly of such a course. But I'm afraid it is hard to believe. In special illusionship, there's no such thing as New Labour.

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War games with targets but no aims

War has been defined as the continuation of politics by other means. But, in the West's brinkmanship with Saddam Hussein, what is the policy? **David Fairhall** and **Ian Black** outline the options

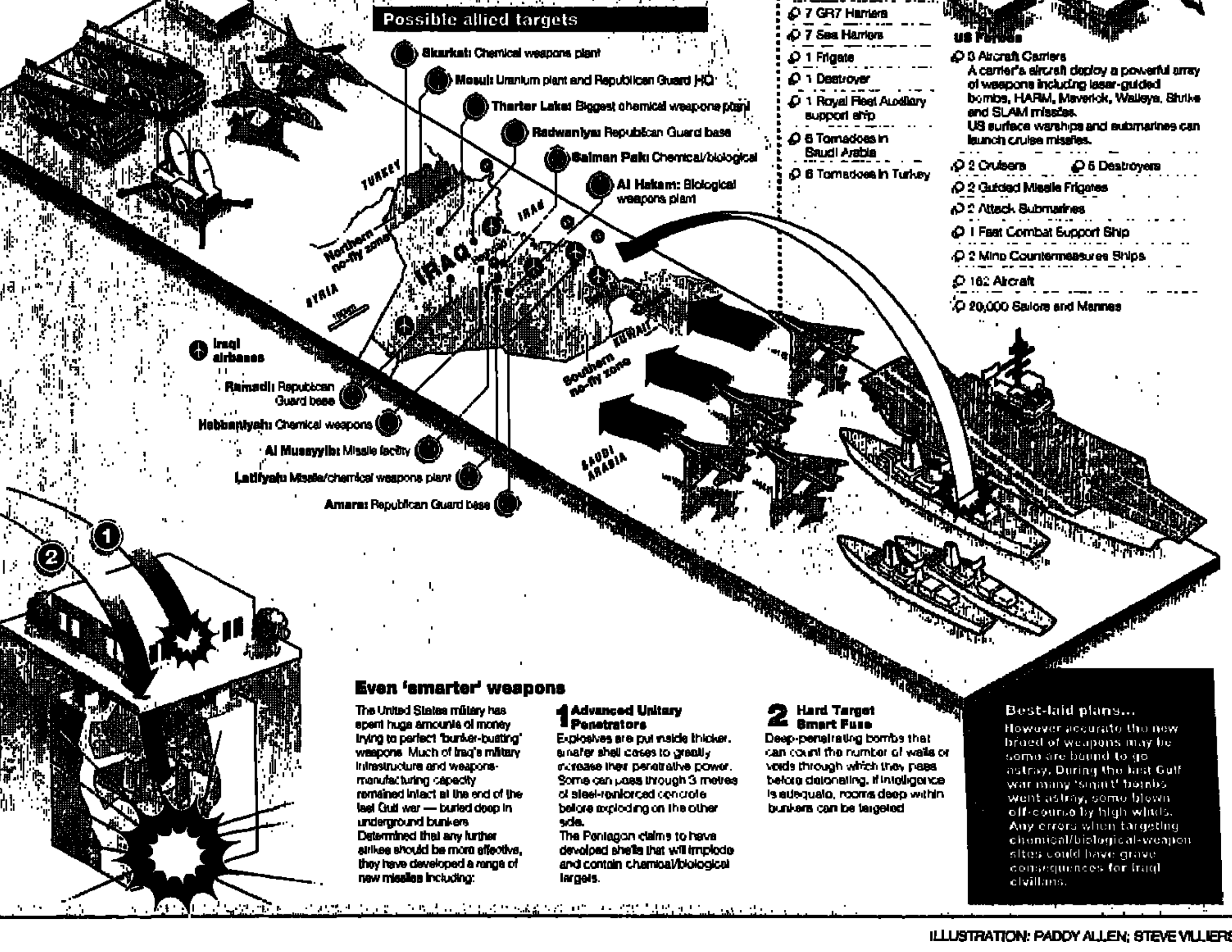


ILLUSTRATION: PADDY ALLEN; STEVE VILLIERS

THE military objective least likely to be achievable by the air strikes Washington and London have in mind is the direct elimination of Saddam Hussein's remaining weapons of mass destruction — well concealed drums of VX nerve gas or bottles of deadly anthrax spores. What is more or less certain, however, is that air strikes will put an end to a United Nations inspection programme that has successfully rooted out the larger part of that weapons programme, particularly the nuclear facilities.

The rationale for military action therefore depends on broader objectives that can more reliably be achieved, plus the desperate hope that somehow they will trigger Saddam's downfall.

Three main kinds of target are likely to be involved:

- Those bearing at least indirectly on Iraq's residual capability for mass destruction, such as chemical works and and biological laboratories;
- The reconstructed air defence radars and missile batteries which hinder routine operations like American U2 reconnaissance flights;
- Prestigious military installations such as the Republican Guard headquarters, which help to bolster Saddam's standing within his military regime.

For air attacks to make sense — unless by some brilliant stroke of military intelligence, or simple chance, a bomb landed on the bunker where Saddam was hiding — their impact must outweigh both the damage done to the UN control regime and the political backlash that will be felt from other Gulf states when more of their fellow Arabs fall innocent victim to the inevitable "collateral damage". Beyond that, the strikes should at least bring the Iraqi dictator's downfall nearer.

This is an extremely tall order, even if the Americans have developed some clever new bunker-busting bombs.

There is no evidence, admittedly, that either the Pentagon or Britain's Ministry of Defence have positively advised against renewed air strikes. Some of the US commanders will surely relish another chance to show what their hi-tech weaponry can do. But military analysts admit that the case for strikes is nowhere near as strong as it was when cruise missiles could still be launched at large, easily identifiable chunks of Saddam's nuclear programme.

So when Bill Clinton and Tony Blair say for the umpteenth time that military action will be used only as a last resort, they probably mean it. Their brinkmanship contains a large element of calculated military bluster and political desperation.

Neither government has declared any aim except to force Saddam to comply with UN weapons inspections. "We're not in the business of overthrowing Saddam Hussein — that will be the job for his people," the British defence secretary, George Robertson, said at the weekend. Exactly how he did not explain.

While public attention has deliberately been focused on the allies' military preparations, surprisingly little thought seems to have been given to the likely political effect of new air strikes on one of the world's most brutal and impenetrable regimes.

Yet Iraqi opposition groups, Middle East analysts, and some government officials all warn that this is a mistake likely to lead to a re-run of what happened in 1991: a powerful but incomplete military blow followed by the re-consolidation in power of a vengeful and dangerous Saddam.

"Without a political plan to remove Saddam's regime, military strikes will be counter-productive," Ahmed Chalabi, president of the Iraqi National Congress, the largest opposition group, argued this week. "Military action alone will not remove Saddam. It will not remove the weapons of mass destruction. It will not solve the immediate problem. It will also give him an excuse to throw out Unscom [the United Nations inspectors]. Thousands of Iraqis will die. Saddam will make sure they will, so he can get sympathy."

Even supporters of selective attacks say they must avoid hitting Iraq's infrastructure, roads, bridges, hospitals and schools — anything that will make life harder for the mass of ordinary people suffering under the burden of six years of punitive sanctions.

The Republican Guard apart, it may be sensible to avoid hitting the regular army, said to contain many potential anti-Saddam forces. Only last month, according to opposition sources, brigadiers from air defence and chemical warfare units joined the ranks of defectors.

In a brutal regime like Iraq, no open opposition is possible. Executions, arrests and torture are part of daily life, informers are everywhere.

"People know that if they take action and they're wrong they are going to get butchered," said one expert. "The problem from an opposition point of view is that people would only climb on to the bandwagon once they are sure it's going to run Saddam over."

ABROAD, exiled groups are divided and weak. The two main Kurdish factions in the north are at loggerheads, vying for Saddam's favours, their CIA links exposed and their territory useless as a base for anti-regime operations.

But Saddam's enemies are united on one vital point conspicuously ignored by the US and Britain: that explicit support for overthrowing the Iraqi leader is the only key that would unlock the door to wider resistance.

Other specific ideas for encouraging Iraqis include:

- Declaring Saddam a war criminal;
- Recognising a provisional Iraqi government formed by the Iraqi opposition;
- Unfreezing hundreds of millions of dollars of Iraqi assets abroad;
- Restricting Saddam's forces by setting up a "no-drive zone" — a ground equivalent to the current no-fly zones — or extending the flight ban to cover the entire country.

"Everyone says Saddam is boxed in," said Dr Chalabi. "But it is the Americans and British who are boxed in by their refusal to support the idea of political change in Iraq. The consequences of that are disastrous. People should read Clausewitz. War is [the continuation of] policy by other means. But what is the policy here?"

As the military await a political decision, they are fine-tuning their contingency plans. In these days of digital satellite communications this can be co-ordinated from a remote US command centre in Tampa, Florida, and on the British side, from the deep bunker at Northwood, near London, which houses the permanent joint force headquarters.

The earliest date for the onset of hostilities is still a week or two away. The final planning cycle for a complex series of air strike "packages" would normally take 72 hours, and many diplomatic clearances must first be obtained. Much of the allied air forces (including the RAF's Tornado reconnaissance bombers) are currently based in Saudi Arabia, but given Riyadh's reservations, they may have to be moved to Kuwait before they can go into action.

The main reason both the US and Britain decided to deploy aircraft carriers in the Gulf — in Britain's case by rushing HMS Invincible back across the Atlantic — is that raids can if necessary be launched without obtaining anybody else's permission, a point that will not have been lost on Saddam.

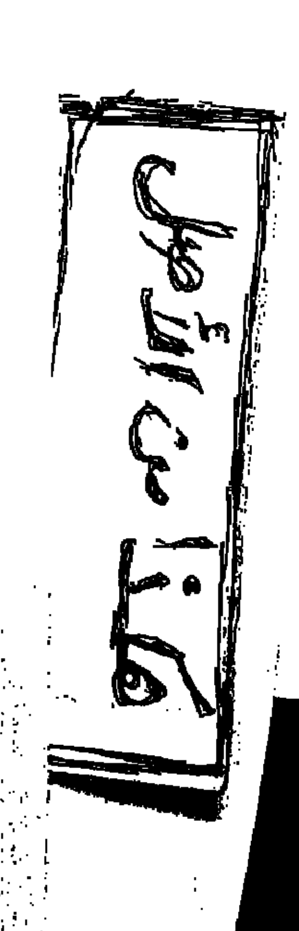
If London finally approves the strikes, British aircraft will be placed under the tactical control of the local US commander. But the British chain of command will retain an ultimate veto over the choice of targets, and the way its own aircraft are employed, just as it did on the Gulf war. The British government could change its mind "right up to the eleventh hour", a senior military source emphasised this week.

In a further move to enhance Britain's freedom of manoeuvre, additional, hurriedly purchased laser guidance pods were being dispatched to the Gulf at the weekend to equip the RAF GR7 Harriers aboard Invincible, so they can bomb without relying on US aircraft to illuminate their targets. If the wrong targets are hit, or innocent civilians killed, there will be no embarrassing arguments about which nation was responsible.

These infra-red "Tiald" guidance pods are already available to the RAF Tornadoes patrolling the Iraqi no-fly-zone from Al-Kharg, the Saudi airfield near Riyadh where most of the US Air Force's planes are also based. To begin with, the pods were used for medium level-reconnaissance, where there was a rare gap in the US inventory.

Good quality tactical air reconnaissance is still just about the only military capability Britain can offer the US which its own forces could not provide as well or better.

The hard fact is that in this campaign, the loyal Brits are politically valuable but militarily irrelevant.



British pharmaceutical firms agree $160 billion merger

Sarah Ryle and Paul Farrelly

AN AUDACIOUS plan to create the largest drugs company in the world was announced last weekend. The proposed merger between Britain's two largest pharmaceuticals groups, Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham, would create a company worth almost $160 billion.

The move came less than two weeks after news that SmithKline was to join forces with American Home Products. That plan has now been abandoned.

Stock markets on both sides of the Atlantic soared in response to the proposed merger. In New York on Monday the Dow Jones industrial index closed 201 up at 8107 after one of the strongest days of trading in the history of Wall Street. London's Stock Exchange climbed to an all-time high for the fourth time in as many days, with the FTSE 100 index finishing 140 up at just under 5600.

The two companies have agreed that if the deal goes ahead, current Glaxo Wellcome shareholders will end up with 59.5 per cent of the new giant, the remainder going to SmithKline Beecham shareholders.

The talks between the two sides started late last month — Glaxo making the initial approach. The deal represents a coup for Glaxo Wellcome's chief executive, Sir Richard Sykes. Banking sources say Sykes placed a call to his opposite number, Jan Leschly, two days after SmithKline confirmed the talks with AHP.

The combined mega-group would have 7 per cent of the global drugs market — putting it way out in front of rivals Merck of the United States and Novartis of Switzerland. The new combine's research budget will be $3 billion — twice the size of its nearest rival.

The companies have strengths in complementary areas. SmithKline is strong in vaccines, anti-depressants and over-the-counter treatments. Glaxo's strengths include asthma treatments. But there are overlaps in cancer-related treatments and anti-viral drugs.

This will fuel speculation that the companies will seek cost savings of up to $1.5 billion a year by ironing out the overlap — especially as both businesses have headquarters in the UK. Up to 10,000 research and development jobs in Britain are at risk. But the companies' global workforce of 106,000, especially its 30,000 US employees, may also be affected by the merger.

The size of the deal will mean close investigation by the regulatory authorities in the UK and Europe — but SmithKline Beecham is understood to be confident of "an enormous will" to get the merger through.

One adviser commented: "This deal will translate into the worst nightmare for all other competitors around the world." — *The Observer*

Globalisation in need of repairs

Larry Elliott in Davos

LIKE a new car that unexpectedly develops life-threatening faults, the 1997 model of globalisation has been recalled by the makers. The havoc wreaked in the East Asia by the crisis of the past nine months has led to a significant change of heart. At Davos last weekend the talk was not whether free market fundamentalism should be reined in, but how.

Up in the Swiss Alps it was almost impossible to find anybody who professed to be a true believer in undiluted laissez-faire. As one critic of globalisation put it, if the masters of the universe are worried, something must have gone seriously wrong. Something *has*.

The corporate élite sat in stony silence as John Sweeney, president of the United States trade union movement, let rip. Asked whether labour had a role in the new world order, he replied: "Let us be clear. If labour has no role, democracy has no future.

"Social justice does not 'compromise the future of the model'. It is essential to its survival. If this global economy cannot be made to work for working people, it will reap a reaction that may make the 20th century tranquil by comparison.

"This global system broadcasts its stark contrasts — of untold wealth for the few and growing insecurity for the many; of laws that protect property and expose people; of liberated capital and repressed workers. The inequities are indefensible ethically but they are also unsustainable economically."

It was glorious stuff, made all the better because it is now clear, even to the world's business élite, that globalisation does not just mean surfing the Net and leaner production, but unemployment, poverty, crime and social exclusion.

Bob Kuttner, editor of American Prospect, put it another way. There is no longer just a fault line between those who believe in laissez-faire and those who believe in a mixed economy, there is also one between those think that all laissez-faire needs to make it work properly is a minimal safety-net and those who argue direct action is needed to slow the casino economy.

Some people, of course, feel that any attempt to reform the current system is doomed. A coalition of sorts has emerged between those "ultras" on the free-market right who believe that capitalism is red in tooth and claw or is nothing, and those on the far left who believe that there is nothing that can be done by inveterate reformers to prevent global capitalism destroying itself.

Intellectually, both these philosophies have merit. Attempts to regulate capitalism can end up in stifling stagnation. Similarly unsustainable is global capitalism's blindness to anything but the bottom line and an apparent indifference to inequalities. But sitting back and doing nothing has been tried before. That was what happened between 1929 and 1932. Capitalism did not collapse although, as President Zedillo of Mexico pointed out last weekend, the decision to allow large chunks of the US banking system to go to the wall meant that it came close.

George Soros said in Davos that those who claimed global financial markets were self-correcting were wrong. There was no natural swing of the pendulum back to equilibrium, but a tendency towards self-fulfilling prophecies and persistent instability. The world needed to rediscover the spirit of Bretton Woods, the 1944 conference that established post-war global financial institutions and the system of fixed exchange rates with capital controls.

Or take Peter Sutherland, the director-general of Gatt, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, who was one of the architects of the new world order. Mr Sutherland, now chairman of Goldman Sachs International and BP, is calling for a globalisation summit to ensure that the poorest countries are not marginalised and that living standards in the developed world are not jeopardised in a "race to the bottom".

Or James Wolfensohn, the president of the World Bank, who wrote in the Financial Times last week: "Just as there is a need to soothe markets, so there is an urgent need to address human travail." The Bank has provided $16 billion to Korea, Indonesia and Thailand in order to help fund unemployment insurance schemes and programmes to safeguard "spending for basic education and services for the poor".

Those of us who have warned of globalisation's perils may disagree with some suggested reforms or say they do not go far enough, but the change in mood is welcome.

IMF faces crisis shake-up

Alex Brummer and Larry Elliott

RADICAL changes in the operations of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank are to be proposed by finance ministers at a meeting in London later this month in response to the Asian crisis.

The plans for adjusting the role of the IMF and the World Bank, to put them in tune with globalised and open capital markets, will be discussed at Lancaster House, in London, on February 21 and could form the core of the agenda for the Birmingham summit, to be chaired by Tony Blair in May.

Officials preparing for the first Group of Seven meeting under the chairmanship of Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, have dubbed the ideas "Halifax II", a reference to the changes in the structures of the international financial institutions put in place in Halifax, Nova Scotia, after the economic meltdown in Mexico at the end of 1994.

The following changes are being proposed:

- Tightening data requirements for member countries so there is clearer, up-to-date information on capital market positions;
- An improved communications mechanism for the IMF which will allow it to voice concerns and force changes in policy in a more public way;
- Updating the IMF's mandate so that its role in resolving problems in the capital markets and banking ranks alongside sorting out balance of payments imbalances;
- Developing greater expertise at the IMF and World Bank in the workings and operations of banking systems which have been at the core of the Asian problem;
- Making use of the World Bank's guarantee powers in capital market crises. This might provide an alternative to global banks pulling out credits and hastening the financial collapse.

In Brief

THREE world-leading cigarette makers — BAT, Philip Morris and RJR Nabisco Holdings — are the subject of a criminal antitrust investigation by the US justice department. Federal investigators are trying to determine if the companies colluded on the price of tobacco leaf.

BRITISH AIRWAYS announced its no-frills airline, Go. Based at Stansted, Go will fly to European destinations, using 144-seater Boeing 737 aircraft. The cheap offshoot has received an injection of $80 million from the parent company.

BOEING, the world's biggest aircraft maker, reported its first annual losses since 1959 last year — $178 million. This follows acute production problems and charges connected with its $16.3 billion takeover of rival McDonnell Douglas last summer.

A RECORD $860,000 fine for serious failures linked to pension mis-selling has been imposed on insurance company London & Manchester Assurance by the Personal Investment Authority, the City watchdog.

FEARS that Britain is heading for recession this year grew as evidence emerged that the economy is cracking under the pressure of falling consumer confidence, a ballooning trade deficit and the effects of the Asian crisis.

THE UK government is planning the biggest shake-up of company law for 50 years in an attempt to give employees and consumers a bigger say in the running of firms. The fundamental review may include introduction of a minimum wage and limits on working time, together with a wide-ranging review of business law leading to a new Companies Act.

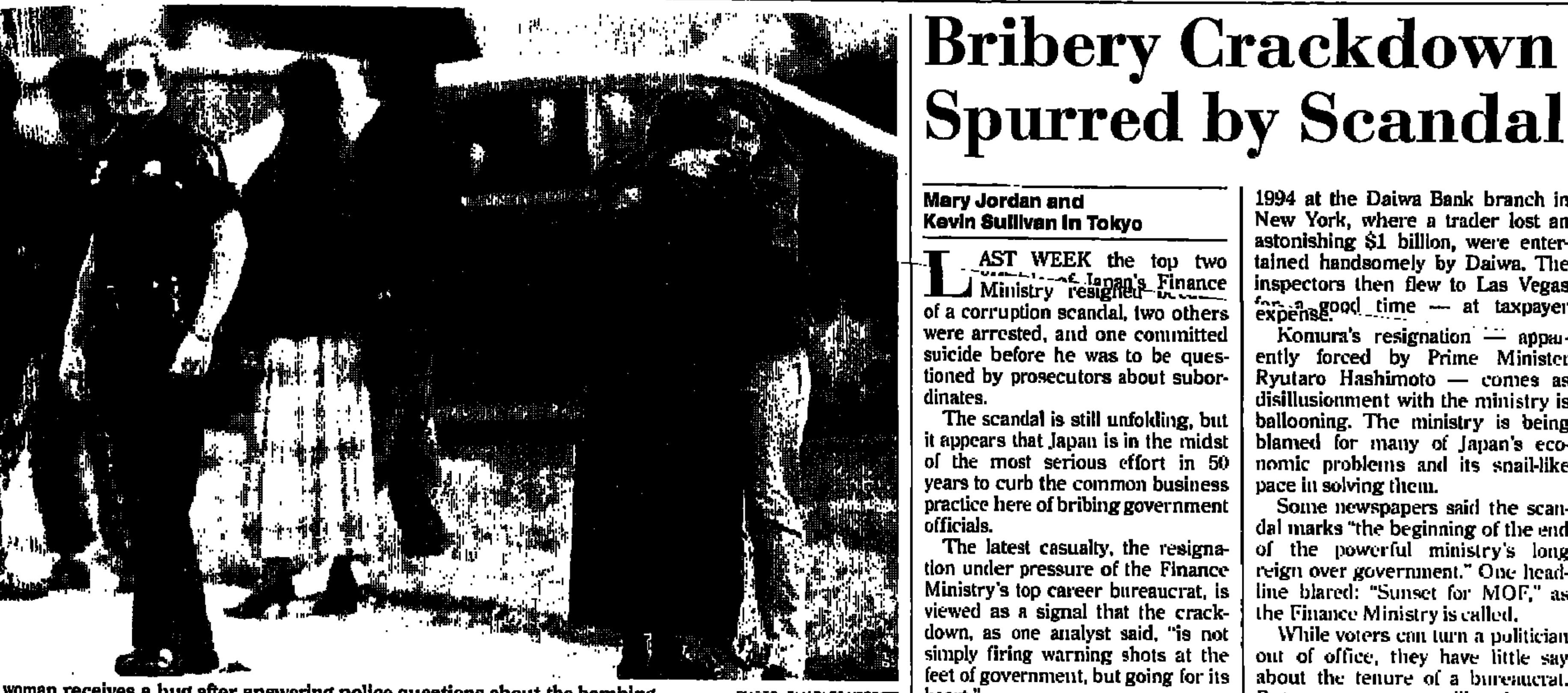
POTENTIAL bidders for the Energy Group, owner of Eastern Electricity, are preparing for a three-way takeover battle. Nomura International, Texas Utilities and Pacificorp are believed to be preparing offers.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates February 2	Sterling rates January 27
Australia	2.3855-2.3890	2.4714-2.4747
Austria	20.97-20.98	20.86-20.88
Belgium	61.49-61.58	61.19-61.29
Canada	2.3768-2.3788	2.4012-2.4035
Denmark	11.35-11.36	11.30-11.31
France	9.988-9.996	9.931-9.939
Germany	2.9808-2.9829	2.9684-2.9690
Hong Kong	10.46-10.52	12.84-12.85
Ireland	1.1872-1.1890	1.1782-1.1802
Italy	2,941-2,944	2,928-2,929
Japan	207.29-207.54	209.17-209.43
Netherlands	3.3595-3.3618	3.3428-3.3460
New Zealand	2.7683-2.7708	2.8265-2.8316
Norway	12.33-12.34	12.31-12.33
Portugal	304.99-305.29	303.56-303.91
Spain	252.68-252.91	251.66-251.88
Sweden	13.20-13.21	13.12-13.13
Switzerland	2.4147-2.4174	2.4082-2.4113
USA	1.6360-1.6367	1.6583-1.6593
ECU	1.5113-1.5127	1.5047-1.5085

FTSE 100 Share Index up 361.8 at [illegible], FTSE 250 Index up 83.7 at 4878.4. Gold down [illegible]

The Washington Post



A woman receives a hug after answering police questions about the bombing PHOTO: CHARLES NESBITT

Bomb at Abortion Clinic Kills Guard

Donald P. Baker in Birmingham

A BOMB so powerful it shattered glass a block away exploded outside a Birmingham, Alabama abortion clinic last week, killing an off-duty policeman moonlighting as a security guard and seriously injuring a nurse on her way to work.

Officials said it was the first fatal bombing of an abortion clinic since violence at clinics began to be recorded more than 15 years ago. The blast occurred one week after the 25th anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision that cleared the way for legal abortions in the United States.

President Clinton swiftly condemned the bombing, calling it "an unforgivable act that strikes at the heart of the constitutional freedoms and individual liberties all Americans hold dear" and pointing out that recent legislation makes it a federal crime to interfere with a woman exercising her right to visit an abortion clinic.

Randy Tate, executive director of the anti-abortion Christian Coalition, joined in the condemnation, calling it a "reprehensible act of violence."

No one claimed responsibility for the attack, which occurred at 7:33 a.m., before the clinic had opened, and no warning was given, according to Birmingham Police Chief Mike Coppage.

Anti-abortion protesters marched here last month, but police said the demonstrations were peaceful. Nevertheless, tensions have been high on the abortion issue in Alabama over efforts in the state legislature to ban certain late-term abortions called partial-birth abortions. Alabama is one of 19 states where lawmakers have sought such bans.

The clinic bombed, the New Woman All Women Health Care center, is among four Alabama abortion centers that tried through lawsuits to block the state government from carrying out new state laws that would place limits on some late-term abortions. A request from the clinics that the laws be suspended until the legal cases are settled was turned down last week by a federal judge in Montgomery, the state capital.

Counting on Our Allies

EDITORIAL

BY RIGHTS, France, Russia, China, Turkey, and other more or less reluctant partners of the United States in thwarting Iraq's chemical- and biological-weapons ambitions, can no more want to see weapons of mass destruction unholstered in the unsettled gulf region than does the United States. On the national-security merits they have every reason to be at the American side.

Yet of those who have stalled, only France has recovered good sense as the Iraq crisis worsens — and it only in part. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright was able to draw her French counterpart from a position excluding the use of force — that is, from a position practically inviting Saddam Hussein to go chemical and biological — to a position leaving the use of force as an option if diplomacy fails.

It is suggested that the French and, separately, the Russians have been supplying a diplomatic alternative while the Americans show an ever-stronger military readiness in order to make the diplomacy work. Announcing that the United States is informing its allies that it is moving toward force alone if necessary, not soliciting the approval of its allies, is part of this readiness; another part is pushing Paris and Moscow to deliver a real solution to the inspection imperative. What is going on is a version of the good-cop, bad-cop routine.

The last time the Russians and French were out, however, when Saddam Hussein was challenging the United Nations inspection regime in November, he made fools of them. Having promised them to let the Americans back into the inspector corps, Saddam Hussein was soon making an even more radical challenge of the whole U.N. inspector system.

France has shown some recognition of its humiliation. Russia seems to be continuing its self-indulgent campaign to appease Saddam Hussein and to win back in Iraq a semblance of the former Soviet Union's broad diplomatic role. The overall record must mute any current hopes for a diplomatic solution, but the pursuit of one is essential to widen support for the potential use of force as an unavoidable last resort.

The Russians and even the French remain skeptical of a military solution, especially of one confined to attacks from the air. Who is not skeptical? The deadly stuff is too easy to hide, and Saddam Hussein will win some sympathy for the intervention and for Iraq's casualties. But as Russia and France should know better than anyone, Saddam Hussein has a fundamental contempt for diplomacy.

Force applied deliberately from the air, if it cannot assuredly topple him, can at the least destroy some of his military facilities and put his regime under heavy new political stresses. These are no mean achievements. A special situation exists in Iraq. The gravity of letting a proven and unreconstructed aggressor defy international strictures and wield frightening weapons that threaten opposing armies and civilian populations alike can scarcely be exaggerated. This specter is what makes it necessary for law-respecting nations to unite to the extent possible, and proceed against Saddam Hussein.

Bribery Crackdown Spurred by Scandal

Mary Jordan and Kevin Sullivan in Tokyo

LAST WEEK the top two [illegible] of Japan's Finance Ministry resigned [illegible] of a corruption scandal, two others were arrested, and one committed suicide before he was to be questioned by prosecutors about subordinates.

The scandal is still unfolding, but it appears that Japan is in the midst of the most serious effort in 50 years to curb the common business practice here of bribing government officials.

The latest casualty, the resignation under pressure of the Finance Ministry's top career bureaucrat, is viewed as a signal that the crackdown, as one analyst said, "is not simply firing warning shots at the feet of government, but going for its heart."

"This will have political fallout because it is the first major corruption raid of the Ministry of Finance, which since World War II has become the most powerful bureaucracy in Japan," said political consultant Takayoshi Miyagawa. "That ministry controls the money, and therefore the government, and therefore the nation."

The two finance officials arrested were not high-ranking, and the resignation of Finance Minister Hiroshi Mitsuzuka, a political appointee, was almost ritualistic, because the head of an organization is almost always expected to take the fall for the wrongdoing of those he supervises.

But the resignation of senior bureaucrat Takeshi Komura means the scandal has claimed one of the "untouchables," the elite career bureaucrats who hold the most power.

These so-called "armchair emperors" can dictate a private bank's hours of operation, threaten an annoying politician with a tax audit and slice away 10 percent of another agency's budget on a mere whim. Despite small government salaries and apartments, many of these bureaucrats are able to live lavishly, thanks to extravagant dinners, overseas trips and gifts from private companies.

Koichi Kato, one of the most influential politicians in Japan, said that in the future, "we will look back and think that this is a moment when fundamental change took place between Japanese bureaucracy and private sectors."

One of the arrested bureaucrats is said to have demanded not only that banks take him to an expensive eatery in exchange for the confidential government information and lax oversight he offered, but also that it be a favorite haunt: a restaurant where the waitresses wear no underpants.

That establishment in the Shinjuku section of Tokyo, where the menu lists the hearty favorite called shabu-shabu and the attraction is "no pant" waitresses, is fast gaining notoriety at the expense of the elite ministry.

It was also reported last week that bank inspectors who could have uncovered irregularities in 1994 at the Daiwa Bank branch in New York, where a trader lost an astonishing $1 billion, were entertained handsomely by Daiwa. The inspectors then flew to Las Vegas for a good time — at taxpayer expense.

Komura's resignation — apparently forced by Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto — comes as disillusionment with the ministry is ballooning. The ministry is being blamed for many of Japan's economic problems and its snail-like pace in solving them.

Some newspapers said the scandal marks "the beginning of the end of the powerful ministry's long reign over government." One headline blared: "Sunset for MOF," as the Finance Ministry is called.

While voters can turn a politician out of office, they have little say about the tenure of a bureaucrat. But many now are calling for new laws along the lines of those that govern U.S. officials, who are reported here to be able to lawfully accept gifts valued at less than $20 and "doughnuts with their coffee" — not overseas trips and a $40,000 discount on a home, as Japanese public servants are charged with taking.

Many people are also reviving calls for the Finance Ministry to be broken up to diffuse its power, and for elected officials to assume responsibilities that now fall to bureaucrats.

Kato — the highest-ranking official, after the prime minister, in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party — said, "It is now the duty and responsibility of politicians to be really in charge of this nation."

Prime Minister Hashimoto later named a former prosecutor to run the Finance Ministry. The appointment is seen as an attempt by the government to project a fresh, clean image.

The new minister, Hikaru Matsunaga, 69, a former prosecutor who is serving his 10th term in parliament, has also served as head of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry and as chairman of the budget committee in parliament.

Matsunaga will be charged with helping lift Japan's economy out of recession, and quieting complaints from the United States and Europe that Japan needs to jump-start its economy because its long-running recession is dragging down economies around the globe.

The ongoing corruption allegations in the nerve center of Japanese economic life have preoccupied — some say paralyzed — the government just as it is being criticized around the globe for being too lax at fixing the Asian economic crisis.

"Regaining public trust in the Finance Ministry is more important than anything else," Matsunaga told reporters. "If we find any wrongdoing, we will correct it, and we will take disciplinary action against those who have committed it."

U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky captured the growing frustration with Japan last week when she criticized Japanese efforts to help end the economic crisis in Asia as "absolutely inadequate."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 8 1998

Why Does Hillary Stand by Her Man?

David Maraniss

IN THE EARLY morning darkness of Wednesday, January 21, up in the second-floor bedroom of their residence, the husband awakened his wife and said there was something he had to tell her.

"You're not going to believe this, but . . ." he began.

"What is this?" she asked quietly.

". . . but I want to tell you what's in the newspapers," he continued.

That is how first lady [illegible] learned from her husband that he was in trouble again, according to a reconstruction of the scene that she provided on national television. She made the dialogue sound so gentle and innocuous that it evoked the image of a bewildered Ozzie Nelson rousing Harriet from slumber, rather than what it was: the first couple's first discussion of reports of new sex allegations that seemed to threaten everything they had struggled to achieve since they spotted each other in the Yale Law School library 28 years ago.



Hillary Clinton addresses a meeting at the University of Zürich on the first day of her four-day visit to Switzerland PHOTO: ANDY MUELLER

Whether sanitized or the real thing, the first lady's version of the bedroom scene revealed the disparate roles she plays in critical moments. Here she was, presenting herself as the ordinary wife, trying to live an ordinary life, her sleep interrupted by the inanities of the outside world. Minutes later in the same interview, she transformed into someone entirely different, chief partisan in the White House counterattack, claiming that she and her husband were victims of a "vast right-wing conspiracy" that included Kenneth W. Starr, the "politically motivated" independent counsel.

In the first few days after the story broke that Starr was investigating whether Clinton had a sexual relationship with a White House intern and had urged the young woman to lie about it, some of the central questions in the drama concerned the first lady: What would she do, and why would she do it? Would this be one sex story too many for her to tolerate? Would she pack up and leave? Would she recede from public view in a state of depression, or would she take the lead on her husband's behalf?

Many of those questions were posed in subdued tones inside the White House itself, where aides, expressing anxiety and confusion, said they were looking for her to ease their minds and give them a sense of direction in contrast to what they saw as the president's ambiguity. In keeping with her long-established pattern, the first lady moved steadily to resolve the questions, or at least smother them, responding as she has again and again in times of personal and political crisis: by doing whatever is required for the survival of the tumultuous and resilient partnership of Clinton and Clinton.

After keeping a low profile for a few days, she seized control of her husband's defense, seeking to protect not only his position and legacy but hers as well. "I probably know him better than anybody alive in the world," she declared, offering her credentials as his ace defender. Certainly no one matched her experience. She has had to deal with allegations about his unfaithfulness for nearly a quarter-century — since she drove to Fayetteville in 1974 to help him campaign for a congressional seat — and, ever since, from Arkansas to Washington, she has been the singularly essential figure in each recovery he has made in the repetitive cycle of loss and recovery that defines his political career.

This time, she returned to the breach displaying the outwardly unfazed certitude of a battle-tested veteran. She said what she thought needed to be said about her husband. She loved him. She believed him. People misunderstood him. They mistook his gregariousness for something more sinister. Adversaries were out to get him. Always had been. But they had survived before and would again and that was that, silence from now on, business as usual.

For all the questions the first lady answered last week, one remained. It is one of the central [illegible] of her life with Bill Clinton: What motivates her to stay at his side, no matter what? Her critics say the answer is nothing more than a cold and pragmatic arrangement of shared power. Her friends say it can be explained by pride and love. The evidence points to more variegated and complex reasons which, like everything else in their uncommon story, are revealed in their history, in the patterns that appear at the start of their relationship and reappear throughout their long political rise.

The first key to understanding Hillary's behavior today can be found in the original nature of her relationship with Bill Clinton. From the time they began dating at Yale Law School in 1970, they shared a passion for politics, policy, power, books, ideas — and they realized, they told friends, that they could attain heights together that they might not reach separately. Clinton seemed most impressed by her intellect. For her part, Hillary's feelings about Clinton seemed more traditionally romantic. One friend described her as "besotted."

THE second key to understanding Hillary's behavior today comes from the pattern that developed after they got married, moved to Little Rock and became the most powerful couple in Arkansas. Throughout that period from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, there were regular intervals when their personal relationship seemed endangered, often by Clinton's sexual behavior. The true extent of his infidelity is known only to him.

But the most important pattern that developed over that long haul in Arkansas was that in times of real crisis, when Clinton's career, and their shared dream, seemed imperiled — for whatever reason, his personal behavior or larger political forces — it was Hillary who took the lead and made it possible for him to survive and recover. She did this largely by turning outward, coolly focusing her anger and indefatigable energy on his adversaries. This habitual response intensified their symbiotic relationship at a moment of vulnerability and made it easier for her to repeat the process the next time.

The [illegible] crisis of this sort came in 1980 when Clinton, at age 34, after a single two-year term as governor, was defeated, rendered the youngest ex-governor in American history. He was depressed by the loss, consumed by bitterness, convinced that journalists had conspired against him, doubtful that he could recover. Hillary stepped in and made recovery possible. She went to the press and calmly described the forces that were out to get her husband, explaining that he had lost because "there was no effective counterattack" to the negative stories spread by his opponent, Frank White, and the Republican right.

And, in response to criticism that she seemed too much the feminist for Arkansas tastes, she willingly changed her image: She softened her hair, bought contact lenses, compiled a new wardrobe, used more makeup, even changed her name. No more Hillary Rodham in public; she was now Mrs. Clinton.

At the low point in Clinton's life, she did everything it took to bring him back. He returned to the governor's mansion in 1983 and did not leave until he packed his bags for the White House. Throughout his final decade as governor, even as their marriage went through a series of tests, their professional partnership grew ever stronger: From the ashes of 1980, she emerged as his key policy adviser and political strategist.

The final key to understanding Hillary's response to the latest allegations comes from the longstanding sense she and Clinton share that they are in a war for survival, that they engender hatred in their adversaries that exceeds the norm, that people are constantly spreading false rumors about them, that there is, as she claimed last week, a right-wing conspiracy out to destroy them.

David Maraniss is the author of First In His Class: A Biography of Bill Clinton

Private Morality, Public Interest?

OPINION
David S. Broder

WHETHER THE Monica Lewinsky affair ends in vindication for President Clinton, resignation or something in between, the press and the people of this country need to ask themselves some questions. Once the matter is settled, we need to think about the really murky issue of when the private sexual behavior of presidents and presidential aspirants deserves to be a matter for public scrutiny.

I am not filing a brief for the president. The accusations against him in both the Paula Corbin Jones civil suit and in the investigation by Whitewater special counsel Kenneth Starr of taped revelations by Lewinsky involve more than sex charges. Jones alleges that the governor of Arkansas sent state troopers to bring her, a state employee, to his hotel room and denied her promotions when she refused a crude proposition. The Lewinsky matter involves a middle-aged president and a lowly intern young enough to be his daughter, and also the serious charge of witness-tampering.

But the common thread to all these scandals is sex, and that subject has appeared with growing frequency in recent presidential campaigns. Gary Hart was driven from the race by exposure of his dalliance. George Bush's son wrote a letter to the editor denying charges that his father had an extramarital affair. Even Pat Robertson was confronted with questions about premarital sex.

Maybe, when this is over, we need to ask ourselves if "the French solution" of ignoring bedroom behavior has some merit, if reporters and politicians ought to adopt a variant of the military's policy of "don't ask, don't tell." For decades that was the journalistic norm. That's why Americans learned only after their deaths that FDR had died in the company of another woman and that JFK had uncounted assignations. It's why little was made of Eisenhower's supposed wartime romance.

When I joined the national press corps in the 1960 election campaign, I was instructed by Bill Lawrence of The New York Times about the "west of the Potomac rule," which said very simply, "Don't talk in Washington about what you see on the road."

This can be easily criticized for its hypocrisy and its self-protection in what was then a largely all-male world of politicians and reporters. But it was also a reflection of a reality which has not changed. In the high-energy, self-enclosed, simultaneously exhilarating and exhausting atmosphere of the presidential campaign trail, hothouse romances flourish like weeds. So too in the White House.

The veil of secrecy about these matters has been withdrawn for a variety of reasons, good and bad. Neither the press corps nor the campaign and White House staffs are "good old boys" clubs any longer. Media outlets have proliferated and stories move much more easily from the tabloids to the establishment press.

The nominating process has changed from one controlled by a few insiders, who could judge the candidates' character from firsthand experience, to one dominated by millions of primary election voters whose information comes either from the candidates themselves or from the press.

Under the circumstances, journalistic efforts to explore presidential character have become a necessity. The question is: How illuminating of character is knowledge of sexual behavior?

Some would say it is fundamental, that a politician who breaks his or her marriage vows cannot be trusted with anything. That is a clear and defensible standard. But how many Americans would have sacrificed Roosevelt's leadership in the Great Depression and World War II because of Lucy Rutherford? The modern presidents most immune from sexual scandal were Harry Truman and Jimmy Carter. But the former's White House performance has drawn historians' praise and the latter's not.

Presidential character clearly involves more than sexual purity. By probing so persistently into that one aspect of their lives, the press may force candidates to proclaim a degree of virtue which few in their profession — or ours — sustain. When those claims are debunked, their overall credibility suffers and cynicism grows.

Perhaps a cadre of candidates of impeccable morals awaits. Until then, the press ought to exercise some restraint and try harder to put these matters in perspective. The public is choking on a surfeit of smut.

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Women Still Battle For Combat Jobs

Dana Priest
In Baumholder, Germany

WHEN the Army sent Master Sgt. Dorothy Moses to the 2nd Brigade headquarters of the 1st Armored Division, she arrived in one of the first waves of an Army campaign to move women into its core business of fighting wars.

Before 1994, when the Army opened thousands of combat-related jobs to women, only male soldiers could serve in the 2nd Brigade, which for decades stood on the front lines of the Cold War. The changes made women eligible to fill prime jobs in intelligence and operations, and to command troops in units that were once closed to them.

But Moses and the 11 other women assigned by the Army to the headquarters here, none of them officers, do not work in these fields. They are supply clerks, administrators and a chaplain's assistant. Moses, the second highest ranking woman, runs the kitchen.

Billed as a major step toward gender integration of the country's largest military branch, the Army's policy has produced meager gains for women. The changes opened 20,000 positions to women for the first time in combat brigade headquarters and fields such as combat aviation, engineer bridge companies and intelligence jamming companies. Today, however, just 1,367 women have been sent to previously off-limits units. Most, like Moses, are doing jobs Army women have always done: providing food, supplies, medical care and office work.

Progress in moving women into new areas has been impeded by factors from open discrimination to informal preferences of local commanders, according to Army statistics, internal reports and scores of interviews.

Some women have been kept from jobs because commanders reject prospective candidates without experience in ground combat units. Because women are barred from such front-line combat units — the only posts from which they are still legally excluded — they can't qualify for some jobs that technically are open to them.

The halting pace also is a reflection of what the Army describes as its intentionally slow, non-confrontational approach to assimilating women. Unlike the Navy and Air Force, which adopted more aggressive strategies, Army leaders have opted for "a natural evolution." Although women make up 15 percent of the Army, the highest percentage in U.S. history, the service has no plans to create a cadre of female leaders, to recruit women into jobs where they are scarce or to ensure that they are not assigned alone to units with hundreds of men.

"Historically the Army's approach is more common-sense and lasting," said Lt. Gen. Frederick Vollrath, the service's top personnel officer, who like other top officers compared integration of women with the integration of black and white troops that began in 1948. Historians say it took four decades until the number of black senior noncommissioned officers approached the percentage of African American soldiers overall.

The Army's policy is designed in part to avoid a "backlash" from its strongly male culture, Vollrath said. But for many women it has meant continuing frustration, as they find themselves left behind when men are promoted and kept from jobs that would help them form the network of connections essential to a successful military career. In a recent Army study of gender relations, more than half of women surveyed said they had been treated unfairly on the job because of their gender, twice as many as had complained of sexual harassment.

In the Germany-based 1st Armored Division, such complaints are common. Both men and women say they are working without guidelines for adapting the exclusively male culture on which the service was built to one that depends also on women.

The division is one of the Army's premier fighting forces. Headquartered in Bad Kreuznach and scattered across southern Germany, the division joined the allied attack on Iraq during the Persian Gulf War. Its nearly 12,000 troops have been deployed to Bosnia, and units have been sent to Macedonia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zaire. Women make up 9 percent of the division and 5 percent of its officers, according to division statistics. All but one of the division's 16 highest-ranking women work in logistics, supply and personnel, all traditional areas for women. In this sense, the division mirrors the Army as a whole.



Surrounded by male soldiers, Staff Sgt Ellen Casavantes, of the 501st MP company in Bad Kreuznach, Germany, cleans her weapon PHOTO: NANCY ANDREWS

Nearly three-quarters of female officers and enlisted women work in these areas, along with finance, medical and transportation jobs.

When it comes to high-ranking women in newly opened combat-related units, including combat brigade headquarters and air defense artillery, the division draws a blank: There are no senior or mid-level female officers or senior noncommissioned officers in any of these units, according to personnel records provided by the division and brigade commanders.

"You would expect to see mid-grade officers and NCOs in key, career-enhancing positions like operations, intelligence and command," said Lt. Col. Robert Carrington, head of the Army's office responsible for overseeing women's personnel issues, who has reviewed staffing at the division. "Until women are valued partners in the Army's first team, they will be institutionally discriminated against and have less opportunity."

What that means to Spc. Charmin Irving, who maintains the 2nd Brigade headquarters' small arms, is that a quarter-century after the Women's Army Corps was disbanded and they were allowed to join men in the all-volunteer Army, women still are unwelcome by some male colleagues. "I've had it told to me that men don't believe women should be in the Army," Irving said.

By any measure, the Army is not an ordinary workplace. Its 488,000 men and women vow to kill, and die, for the nation. For generations, the Army's structure has been geared to fighting a sustained, large-scale conventional war. Those who reach the top of its hierarchy traditionally have served in the combat arms closest to battle — the infantry and armor — areas that four years ago were closed to women.

AFTER debate driven by women's battlefield contributions in the Persian Gulf War and national outrage over the harassment of women at the Navy Tailhook convention in Las Vegas, the Defense Department in 1993-94 opened about 260,000 combat-related jobs to women in all the services, including in the reserve and National Guard. More than half of these openings were on Navy warships.

As part of the measures, then-Defense Secretary Les Aspin also rescinded the "risk rule" that had barred women from inherently dangerous jobs, including Air Force bomber and fighter pilots and Navy warships.

Women continue to be prohibited from serving in any role in units whose primary mission is engaging in ground combat, and in units that work directly with those organizations during wartime.

Each service was allowed to apply the new regulations as it saw fit. Nearly all Air Force jobs, including fighter and bomber pilots, were opened to women. All jobs in the Navy, except those on submarines and as special operations SEALs, are now open, although women are put on ships only as separate berthing spaces are built on vessels. Sixty-two percent of jobs in the much smaller Marine Corps are open to women.

For the first time, the Army allowed women to work at brigade headquarters of armor, infantry and special operations organizations. But women remain excluded from smaller combat battalions, companies and platoons that would go further forward, near or at the front line.

Army women also can now fly combat helicopters, be field artillery surveyors and join military intelligence collection companies.

But the gains have been limited. A recent RAND study for the Defense Department found "official and unofficial assignment policies" in the Army that discriminate against women. "Some local commanders will not assign women to certain newly opened units because they have . . . concluded that some assignments that are officially open to women should be closed," RAND reported. Other commanders use women to fill administrative jobs, even though they may be trained in an operational specialty, the study found.

Suicide Bids Fuel Virginity Test Debate

Kelly Couturier In Ankara

THE IMPORTANCE of the virginity of an unmarried girl to a family's honor goes to the heart of Turkey's traditional moral code. But recent suicide attempts by five girls seeking to avoid a forced virginity examination — and a strong defense of the practice by the government's women's affairs minister — has sparked a public outcry.

Women's rights activists were infuriated when Isilay Saygin, state minister in charge of female and family affairs, defended mandated medical examinations to verify the virginity of girls in state-run foster homes.

That Saygin, a woman, is prepared to uphold the state's involvement in a practice that has caused much anguish to some young women is particularly offensive, in the view of several women's groups.

"If girls commit suicide because of virginity tests, they would have committed suicide anyway. It is not that important," Saygin was quoted as saying in a newspaper interview — which she later said misinterpreted her remarks. Stating that she opposes a ban on virginity controls, Saygin argued that such tests were needed to help guide young people's behavior.

The case of the five girls who attempted suicide after the director of their state foster home ordered them to undergo virginity tests when they returned late to their dormitories one night has fueled a campaign elsewhere in the government, led by Human Rights Minister Hikmet Sami Turk, to ban such tests, except in court cases involving sex crimes.

It is difficult to gauge how widespread virginity testing is, given that many families keep such matters private. What is clear is that the centuries-old moral code that gave rise to virginity testing — the premium placed on the chastity of an unmarried girl — remains widely accepted in this Muslim nation, crossing economic and class lines.

"Being a virgin bride signifies a woman's purity and her loyalty to the family," said sociologist Dilek Cindoglu, who has researched virginity testing in Turkey.

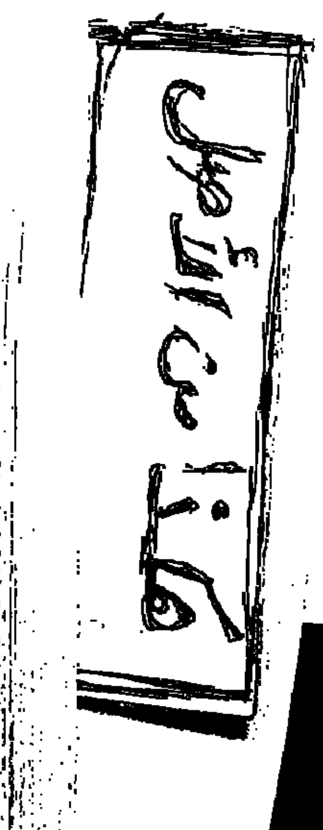
The phenomenon of virginity testing and the social norms behind it exist, paradoxically, in a country where women were granted the right to vote before many of their Western European counterparts; have equal legal rights to men in the areas of marriage, child custody, inheritance and property ownership; and have reached high offices, including that of prime minister.

Physicians interviewed in one study said many young women seek the tests themselves. Some interpret this as an indication of the pressure many women feel in a society in which an unmarried woman discovered not to be a virgin risks being ostracized by her family or losing a chance to get married. In more conservative communities, she risks being beaten or killed.

Human Rights Watch reported finding that virginity exams are forced on female political prisoners as well as common criminal suspects, and said it found evidence of such exams being performed on hospital patients and state foster-home residents.

The five girls involved in the suicide attempts, ages 12-16, took rat poison and then jumped into a water tank rather than face the tests. They survived and the virginity tests were carried out in their hospital beds.

Similar reported cases over the years have provoked outcries from women's groups, including the story of a girl who ran away from home in the southwestern coastal province of Mugla after her school director advised her family to have a virginity exam performed. When the girl was found dead, her father had the exam done on her corpse.



Saluting The New Homeric Age

Michael Dirda

THE SIMPSONS
A Complete Guide to Our Favorite Family
Created by Matt Groening
Edited by Ray Richmond and Antonia Coffman
HarperPerennial. 249 pp. $15.95

FOR A LONG WHILE, I used to scan the TV listings when I felt really tired, hoping to find some program to soothe a troubled soul or tired brain. Alas, almost nothing ever looked appealing enough to spend even 30 minutes of my adult life on. Melrose Place? Dramas about emergency rooms? Not for me, thank you.

Then, one frabjous day and long after the rest of the world, I discovered The Simpsons. In years past I might have given temporary television allegiance to the original Star Trek, to Dr. Who (Tom Baker only), and, long, long ago, to The Avengers and The Prisoner, but The Simpsons has proven better than any of them. And it's only a cartoon — or, more accurately, an animated version of the Human Comedy (complete with recurring characters), a wickedly funny yet oddly affectionate satire of American life at the end of the 20th century. Imagine the unholy offspring of Mad magazine, Mel Brooks's movies, and Our Town.

Like Trekkies or sports fans, addicts of The Simpsons know that the show's genius derives from its details. We look hard to see what Bart is scribbling on the blackboard at the opening of each program; we wait for power-mad Mr. Burns to place his fingertips together and murmur "Excellent"; we check to confirm that the guest voice was Meryl Streep or Patrick Stewart or Mandy Patinkin. And though Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa and Maggie obviously remain the heart of the series, most connoisseurs particularly relish certain minor characters. I, for one, yearn for a show that would spotlight the genial charlatan Dr. Nick Riviera, graduate of the Hollywood Upstairs Medical College (altogether now: "Hello, Dr. Nick"). Of course, everyone's favorite villain remains the one, the only, the inimitable Sideshow Bob, that fiend in human shape with LUV and HAT tattooed on his knuckles.

Because so much happens in each Simpsons episode (multiple story lines, a barrage of sight gags, nonstop repartee), it's easy to miss some of the humor — one reason why the shows bear repeated viewing. Happily, The Simpsons: A Complete Guide To Our Favorite Family has been organized with the addict in mind. This bible includes a synopsis of every episode, original air dates, artistic credits (there are more writers than I realized for a show so consistent in tone), brief biographies of every major and many minor characters (from holier-than-thou neighbor Ned Flanders to Lunchlady Doris), quips and bits of dialogue, stills from each show, and pointers to



ILLUSTRATION: MATT GROENING. TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX FILM CORPORATION

the "stuff you may have missed." There's a punctiliously exhaustive list of every circumstance in which Homer says "D'oh!"; a complete Itchy and Scratchy filmography; and double-page spreads devoted to the Treehouse of Horror Halloween specials.

Most valuable of all, I think, are the extensive quotations from each episode. Bart: "Dad, you shot the Zombie Flanders!"; Homer: "He was a zombie?" Or this: "'Captain's Log Stardate 6051: had trouble sleeping last

Addicts of The Simpsons know that the show's genius derives from its details

night . . . my hiatal hernia is acting up. The ship is drafty and damp; I complain but nobody listens'" (an aged Captain Kirk, in Star Trek XII: So Very Tired). Moe answers the phone at his tavern: "I'll check. Amanda Huggenkiss. Hey, I'm looking for Amanda Huggenkiss. Why can't I find Amanda Huggenkiss?" A sign at Springfield's Worst Western Hotel: "Ask about our sheet rental."

Although The Simpsons continues at a high level of excellence, I don't think its producers have ever matched the four shows of October 1993: "Cape Feare," in which Bart and his family, under the Witness Protection Program, become the Thompsons in a (vain) effort to escape the wrath of Sideshow Bob; "Homer Goes to College," with its opening sequence about the unexpected arrival of safety inspectors at the nuclear power plant (As Mr. Burns says, "The watchdog of public safety. Is there any lower form of life?"); "Rosebud," the Citizen Kane parody starring Mr. Burns's teddy bear, Bobo; and "Tree House of Horror IV," which includes "The Devil and Homer Simpson," wherein Homer sells his soul for a donut.

To appreciate fully The Simpsons: A Complete Guide you should be familiar enough with the show to hear the distinctive voice of each character, from the gravelly cigarette-raw snickers of Marge's sisters, Selma and Patty (who work at the Department of Motor Vehicles bureau and revere MacGyver), to the Teutonic mumbles of action hero Rainer Wolfcastle (star of Radioactive Man).

The guide discloses that Harry Shearer does the voices of Smithers, Ned Flanders, Principal Skinner, Kent Brockman, Otto, Mr. Burns, Dr. Hibbert, Reverend Lovejoy, media psychotherapist Dr. Marvin Monroe (another personal favorite), Scratchy and the alien Kang, among many others. Dan Castellaneta and Hank Azaria include a similar number of characters in their spoken repertoires. Altogether astonishing.

Recently, the page proofs for a forthcoming book called Who Killed Homer? crossed my desk. For a moment I exulted, thinking it must be some kind of novelized sequel to the famous two-part Simpsons episode "Who Shot Mr. Burns?" Then I realized it was actually about the decline of classical studies in our time. An important subject, one I'm quite interested in — but I couldn't help but feel a little disappointed.

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Mouse That Roared

Jonathan Yardley

THE MAGIC KINGDOM
Walt Disney and the American Way of Life
By Steven Watts
Houghton Mifflin. 526 pp. $30

IT IS an inescapable truth that Walt Elias Disney is one of the major figures of 20th-century America, however disagreeable that may be to those who find little to applaud in the Disneyfication of our culture. Like other individuals and institutions of pervasive, not always benign influence, Disney and the corporation that bears his name are irresistible targets for attack, a sport in which I, like countless others, have frequently and gleefully participated.

But it is rather more difficult to look Disney square-on, to assess him soberly, as free as possible of cultural bias and reflexive condescension. This is what Steven Watts has attempted to do in The Magic Kingdom, a very long book that falls somewhere between biography and cultural history. Watts, a professor of history at the University of Missouri, confesses at the outset to having fallen under the Disney spell as a child four decades ago, and at times he seems incapable of wiping the stars out of his eyes; though not exactly Disney's apologist, he does bend over quite far backwards to give him his due. But in the process he requires us to acknowledge that his stupendous success arose not from cynical manipulation of the popular audience but from heartfelt understanding of and sympathy with "average Americans and their hopes, fears and values."

Walt Disney was no average American. He was preternaturally smart, industrious and ambitious. Nor was he, as he liked to claim, a bona-fide small-town American boy; his roots were more complicated than that, so his sentimental vision of small-town life was rooted at least as much in fantasy as in fact. Indeed, it may have been all the stronger for that. A persistent strain in American culture is the outsider, the person who longs to fit into one corner or another of our vast society and expresses that longing in literature or art or something (as in Disney's case) considerably short of those but far more popular.

Disney's career as a cartoonist began in the aftermath of World War I in Kansas City. It ran in fits and starts but in a clear upward direction, quickly taking him to Hollywood and its nascent movie industry. This was a watershed moment in American history. Watts's summation of Disney's role in this momentous and traumatic process deserves to be quoted in full:

"In the broadest sense, Disney smoothed the jagged transition from the values of the Victorian age to those of a fledgling consumer America. In addition, he helped to diamantle barriers between highbrow and lowbrow cultural activity and to bridge the gulf that separated the realistic art of the 19th century from the modernism of the 20th. Throughout, he negotiated the treacherous waters that lay between art and politics, synthesizing powerful impulses in subtle and soothing ways. Disney had a foot in the past and the present throughout the 1930s, and he helped Americans accommodate to a new age by appealing to older transitions while forging a new creed of leisure, self-fulfillment and mass consumption. More than a mere cartoonist or entertainer, he managed to become, to use his own phrase, a spokesman for the American way of life. The role was enormously satisfying, and Walt Disney played it with gusto for many years."

Any number of reservations can be attached to that passage — the only blacks in Disney's "America" were stereotypes; the "past" he celebrated was at least as much fiction as fact; the "American way of life" is considerably darker and more ambiguous than what one finds at Disney World — but in essence it is true. One may feel, as a disgruntled former Disney employee did, that Uncle Walt "had the innate bad taste of the American people," but Watts is correct to say that the images Disney offered, at once amusing and soothing, turned out to be palliatives for millions caught up in the most bewildering change since the Industrial Revolution.

It is easy, now, to think of Disney as a malign influence, when one considers the bureaucratic megalith that is Michael Eisner's Disney but he didn't begin that way. As Watts reminds us, the early Disney cartoons had a "unique blend of music, mischief, dance, comedy and heroic melodrama" and "displayed considerable ambivalence about the values of modern American life." In time Disney developed what Watts calls "sentimental modernism," which blended "comforting tradition and challenging innovation" in ways that went down easily, but this took place after Disney the individual evolved into Disney the corporation.

He and his company were scarcely the only ones to follow this path. When the history of 20th-century America is written surely one of its central themes will be how quirky, original visions evolved into mass mediocrity as the people expressing them came under pressure to earn ever more money. But we do well to separate the individual from the corporation, even if in time they became indistinguishable, in Disney's own mind as in ours. In the beginning he was a bright, innocent man who had a deep faith in a somewhat artificial vision of America and a capacity to render this in terms that ordinary people responded to with pleasure and empathy. For a long time being Disney was a great deal of fun, as evidence from the Disney Studio makes engagingly plain. As Watts notes, it is ironic that Disney, whose early work made sport of industrial organization and bureaucracy, in time presided over a bureaucracy as vast as anyone's, but that is the way of the world, or at least of 20th-century America.

By the time of his death in 1966, Disney had become something far larger than the man himself: "a revered national moralist, an example of American achievement, a trusted guardian of the nation's children, and a representative of average citizens and their values, tastes and desires." For many of us this is exceedingly unpalatable but no less true for that. We Americans vote with our pocketbooks, and the multi-billion-dollar corporation that Disney built — the most influential instrument of mass entertainment on the entire planet — may well be the most vivid and self-revealing expression of American vox populi. Like it or not.

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Le Monde

Sierra Leone's junta comes under siege

Thomas Sotinel in Freetown

CLASHES in eastern Sierra Leone between the ruling military junta's forces and the Kamajor militia that supports the ousted president, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, left 35 people dead on January 25. The fighting came in the wake of an earlier engagement on January 19, when the diamond-bearing region of Tongo Fields was recaptured by government forces.

The area, which is rich in alluvial diamonds mined by small individual prospectors, had fallen briefly into the hands of the Kamajors. They are believed to have organised their surprise attack so as to hold prospectors to ransom and obtain enough diamonds to finance their militia. The counter-attack was mounted by an alliance of government troops and former guerrillas of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

Diamonds are both the prize and the fuel of the civil war that has devastated Sierra Leone over the past seven years. In the course of the war, tens of thousands of people have lost their lives in this small West African country, a former British colony founded to resettle freed slaves from Britain.

In the latest phase of the civil war, a coalition of *putschists* in the Revolutionary Armed Forces Council (Rafc) and former RUF rebels is now pitted against the Kamajors, who are supported by the Nigerian army, which has about 10,000 soldiers in Sierra Leone.

The Nigerians, applying sanctions decided on by the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas), have imposed an almost total embargo on Sierra Leone that goes well beyond their official mandate — which was restricted to weapons and fuel. They are in fact besieging Freetown: Nigerian troops control land access to the capital and its airports, while their navy prevents boats from unloading oil (which falls under the terms of the sanctions) and rice (which does not).

It is now eight months since army officers wrested back control of Freetown. On May 25 a group of non-commissioned officers and privates sprang Major Johnny Paul Koroma from Pademba Road prison, where he had been mouldering for six months after being charged with attempting a coup against Kabbah, who had been elected president in March 1996.

The rebels ousted Kabbah, installed Koroma as president, and looted the capital's offices, factories, banks and stores. The coup leaders then invited the RUF rebels to join them. Within days the city streets were teeming with children, some as young as 12, toting assault rifles and grenade-launchers. They now organise road-blocks in collaboration with army troops. But their relations are strained, and disputes often end in shoot-outs.

The young RUF rebels are temporarily without their leader, Corporal Foday Sankoh, a former army officer in his 60s whose ideology boils down to a curious mixture of witchcraft and Maoism. He has been held in Nigeria for nearly a year.

Just before his arrest, Sankoh was living in the Ivorian capital, Abidjan, and President Kabbah was still in power in Sierra Leone. Whether acting on impulse or manipulated by his henchmen, Sankoh flew to Lagos, where he was promptly picked up by police acting on the instructions of Nigeria's leader, General Sani Abacha, who was only too pleased to relieve his friend Kabbah of such a troublesome opponent.

On October 23 the junta, the RUF and Ecowas concluded an agreement in the Guinean capital, Conakry, that provided for the return to power of President Kabbah on April 22. The RUF were then promised they could re-establish links with Sankoh. They now complain they were duped.

It does indeed seem that Nigeria, which has taken over the political and military leadership of West African intervention in Sierra Leone, is in no mood to negotiate and would prefer to impose the return of the ousted president by force.

Several thousand Nigerian troops are stationed at Lungi airport and along the Freetown-Conakry highway. Acting apparently under the authority of Ecowas, they have been designated as part of Ecomog, the West African peace-keeping force in neighbouring Liberia.

Nigeria has announced that 9,000 of its soldiers stationed in Liberia will be redeployed in Sierra Leone. The Freetown junta regards the presence of 12,000-15,000 foreign troops whose task is to disarm the country's opposing factions as tantamount to an "invasion".

Army officers and RUF leaders alike have been making increasingly warlike noises.

The petrol shortage means that most people in Freetown have to move about on foot. Power has been restored, but only after a complete close-down of all production, including the brewing of beer.

Nigeria's liberal interpretation of sanctions has created food shortages. A 50kg sack of rice costs 100,000 leones, about twice what a low-ranking government employee earns a month. The value of Sierra Leone's currency has been plummeting. A dollar is now worth 2,500 leones, double its value before the coup.

The population is grateful to the junta for only one thing: it brought the RUF into the political fold. The junta itself is a rag-bag of reformist officers and roughneck soldiers.

The inhabitants of Freetown often wonder who will protect them from their "protectors". When Nigerian aircraft fly over the city, soldiers fire at them with mortars and grenade-launchers — weapons whose projectiles are designed to explode when they hit the ground. In October 1997 a flypast by the Nigerian air force left 35 people dead — victims of projectiles fired by the junta troops.

(January 28)

A seven-year civil war has devastated Sierra Leone, and a military coup last May has prompted neighbouring countries to impose sanctions
PHOTO. JEAN-MARC BOUJO

Pope falls foul of Germany's Catholics

COMMENT
Henri Tincq

ON JANUARY 27, Pope John Paul caused an outcry in Germany when he published a letter he had sent to German bishops urging them to stop Catholic advisory centres issuing certificates authorising women to have an abortion under certain circumstances clearly defined by law.

That the publication of the letter should have come just after the Pope's trip to Cuba is a coincidence. Yet one cannot help seeing a parallel between the two events, since they symbolise the contradictions of the Pope's 20-year spell in office.

On the one hand, he has defied one of the most stubborn dictatorships in the world and fought to give his Church greater power in Cuba, almost to the point of seeing Catholicism as the only alternative to the island's one-party regime.

And on the other, the Pope has ordered German bishops to end their involvement in a sensitive area — pre-abortion advisory centres — so as not to risk being part of a decision to commit the "criminal" act of abortion.

The Pope's intransigence is puzzling. It could badly dent the trust that Catholic German women have in their Church, which has up to now advised them on whether or not to have an abortion — always a serious decision.

It is surprising that the Pope can be so bold in his defence of justice and human rights, and so timid when faced with the cultural, ethical and sexual issues posed by modern society.

Should he be seen as adopting a "leftwing" stance on questions of social and political morals, and a "rightwing" one when it comes to private, marital and family morals?

The Pope is not interested in such distinctions. He no longer sees any difference between the atheist communist system, which, as he argued in Havana, "reduces religion to the private domain and robs it of any influence or social impact", and the Western mentality, which he regards as materialist and permissive, and equally dangerous because it excludes all references to God and opens up the way to neo-paganism, a "culture of death" whose most tangible sign is abortion.

That such a row should have blown up in Germany is no surprise. It is, after all, a country where, as the adage goes, "one is first and foremost a Protestant, and, if one is a Catholic, one is not primarily a Roman Catholic".

The fraught relationship between the Pope and Germany is the result of an old love affair that ended badly. German cardinals played a key role in the conclave of October 1978 that elected the Archbishop of Krakow, Karol Wojtyla, as Pope.

But the Pope very quickly discovered, to his cost, that the cultural gulf between a Protestant, secularised and liberal Germany, and a Catholic, traditional and authoritarian Poland had not narrowed. The visits which he paid to Germany in 1980, 1987 and 1996 were marred by incidents and counter-demonstrations.

While ties between the Church, the ruling party and social institutions have remained strong in Germany, religious observance has plummeted.

At the same time, the Vatican has become one of the German press's favourite targets. The phenomenon gathered pace after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, to the point where Monsignor Karl Lehman, president of the conference of German bishops, told Le Monde in 1995: "Reunification has reinforced a tendency to criticise and a general shift towards secularisation."

The first Catholic theologian to be suspended by the Vatican, in 1979, was Hans Küng, a professor at the Catholic University of Tübingen, who had become one of the most steadfast opponents of the Pope on such issues as the ordination of women, the celibacy of the clergy and sexual ethics.

In 1992 it was the turn of Eugen Drewermann, a priest and psychoanalyst, to be suspended because he had broken the taboo by discussing the institution of the clergy. In Germany theologians enjoy a status that has no equivalent in the Latin or Slav countries of Europe. They are recognised, remunerated and highly regarded academics. Needless to say, the theologians' independent-mindedness, which is appreciated in Germany, is loathed in Rome.

So it is hardly surprising that Germany's powerful lay Catholics and the more open-minded members of the Catholic hierarchy regularly call on their flock to resist decisions coming out of Rome.

In 1994 Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the Vatican's doctrinal watchdog, who is German, disowned three of his compatriots in the episcopate — including its president, Msgr Lehman. They had publicly called for a relaxation of the Church's attitude towards the remarriage of divorcees.

That same year, it was in Germany that the Pope's letter "definitively" rejecting the possibility of women's ordination provoked the most virulent reactions.

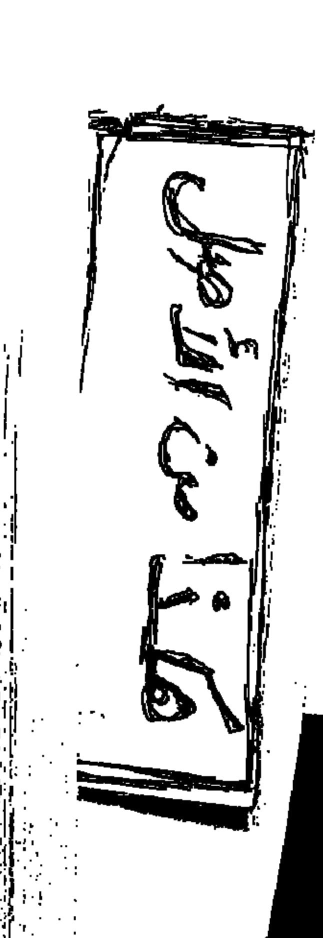
In the latest row over abortion it is not so much the legitimacy of the Pope's position that is at issue as the social and institutional role played by a Church which in Germany, ever since Bismarck's anti-Catholic policy of *Kulturkampf* in the 1870s, took a very long time to win forgiveness for being Catholic.

Now wealthy, powerful and organised along hierarchical lines, the Catholic Church is suffering from the after-effects of all that anti-Roman ill-feeling.

Whole sections of society are drifting away from a brand of Catholicism that no longer meets their aspirations, particularly as regards sexual and marital ethics.

The Pope's latest edict may further alienate Germans from the Catholic Church and threaten its well-established tradition of social commitment.

(January 29)



GUARDIAN WEEKLY February 8 1998

Lula takes leaf out of the evangelists' book

Jean-Jacques Sévilla
in Rio de Janeiro

HOW do you finance an election campaign in a politically correct way when you are perceived as a relentless opponent of the power exerted by high finance? Still smarting from the sneers of right-wingers about the funds he once raised from the private sector, Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva, the candidate of the leftwing Workers Party (WP) at next October's presidential election in Brazil, plans to launch a national subscription.

In so doing, Lula admits he has taken his cue from the self-styled Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, an evangelical Brazilian sect which has amassed a colossal fortune thanks to donations from its followers, most of whom, like the WP's electorate, come from a background of poverty.

Lula is taking a risk. The rosy future promised by campaigning politicians on both sides of the ideological divide is having less and less impact on the poorest Brazilians — in inverse proportion to the "theology of prosperity" peddled by the Universal Church and the many small churches in the evangelical movement.

Brazil, which is officially credited with having more Catholics than any other country in the world (120 million), now also has a hefty population of *crentes* (believers), as Protestants are generically known in Brazil. The Brazil of the Rio Carnival has now become an ideal recruiting ground for a puritan ideology imported from the United States.

Brazil's 16 million Protestants now account for 10 per cent of the population (compared with 6.7 per cent in 1980). In the past few years, the rate of conversions has even accelerated despite virulent attacks by the media on some of the evangelical sects' practices, such as religious fanaticism and extortion.

After spending a brief spell in jail some years ago for "charlatanism", Edir Macedo, the self-proclaimed "bishop" and founder of the Universal Church, rules over a veritable "multinational of faith", which has established itself in 50 countries and is believed to be worth more than $500 million.

The "theology of prosperity", which promises material success as well as eternal salvation, is rapidly putting down roots in sections of a population that was once strongly influenced by liberation theology but which has been ignored by successive governments.

The evangelical sects, while preaching rigorous moral standards (dancing is banned, and homosexuality is regarded as an "illness" that can be cured by prayer), are careful to tailor their aggressive proselytism to suit local beliefs: exorcism, borrowed from Afro-Brazilian syncretic cults, remains popular in Protestant churches, while recourse to abortion, which is condemned both by Rome and by the law (which authorises it only in cases of rape or pregnancies where the mother's life is at risk), is allowed to remain a personal decision.

The evangelical churches, which offer to "expel the devil" through the intermediary of a pastor and to bestow financial redemption on believers who give money, have extended their influence into unexpected territories.

A recent issue of the São Paulo paper, La Folha, reported on the cultural effects of an evangelical mission being set up in two Indian communities in southern Amazonia: "As they get little help from the government, the Indians fall prey to the missions and to the material goods they are given by the clergy. In return for food, clothes and medicine, they promise to worship a single god."

This relationship of dependency results in a gradual abandonment of such ancestral customs as wearing loincloths, hunting turtles or consulting the shaman.

When ordered by the regional public prosecutor to expel the Protestant pastors, whose presence in the reservations is forbidden by law, Jorge Luiz de Paula, the local representative of the National Indian Foundation (Funai), the organisation that looks after Amerindian peoples, refused to obey.

"The evangelical churches have filled a gap left by the government's failure to help," he argues. "How are we going to replace the missions if we haven't got the resources? We don't have the necessary moral authority to insist that they leave."

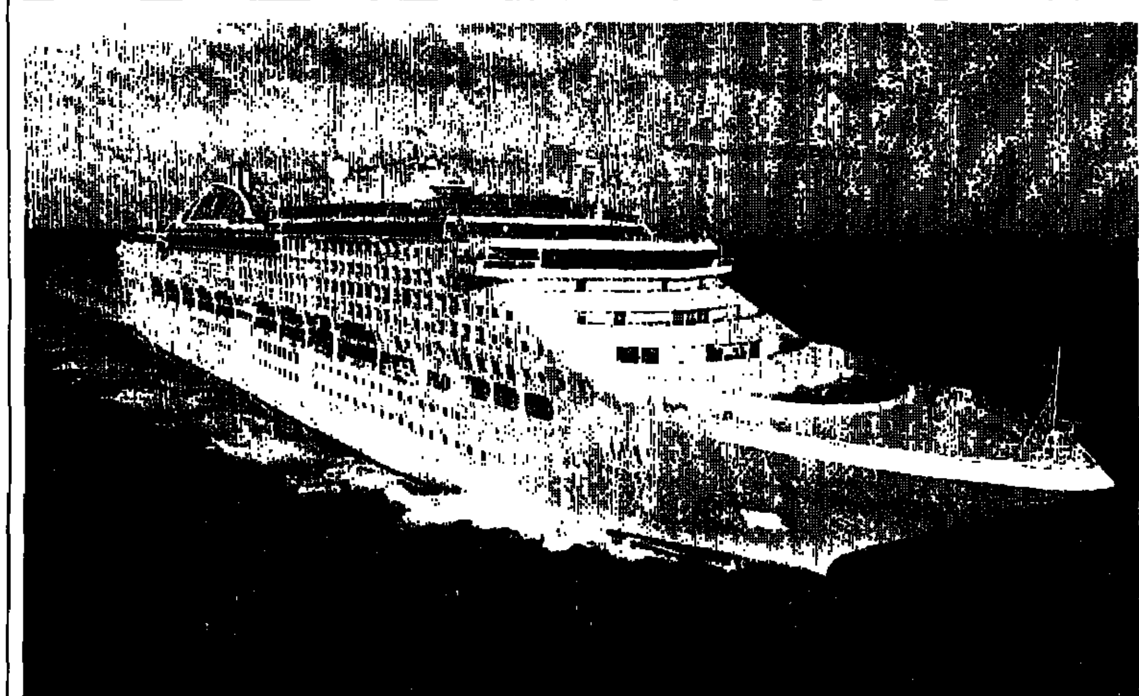
The episode illustrates an important aspect of the strategy which the Universal Church and its rivals have adopted for the past 15 years in attempts to win people's hearts and minds — that of "social marketing".

In a July 1997 report on "the soldiers of faith and prosperity", the weekly Veja revealed that 270 clinics run by evangelical organisations gave free treatment to some 12,000 alcoholics and drug addicts. Veja, highly critical of Edir Macedo and his methods, analysed the phenomenon of the ever-growing ranks of *crentes* for the first time.

Veja stressed "the monumental efforts by the evangelical churches to promote adult literacy" — compulsory reading of the Bible is the basis of their religious activities. Those churches are now competing with the Catholic church in the humanitarian sphere, an area where the latter enjoyed a de facto monopoly until quite recently.

"Money, health and happiness are proof of divine benediction, according to Edir Mcedo," Veja concludes. "If God believes in the sincerity of the offerings made to Him (usually in the form of cash), say the pastors, He will grant the grace that everyone yearns for. This discourse may seem repugnant to followers of other religions, but it has succeeded in mobilising legions of downtrodden people. Every year 600,000 Brazilian Catholics leave the bosom of the Church to venture on to unknown ground."

(January 17)



A life on the ocean wave . . . P&O's Sun Princess helps satisfy the booming demand for cruise holidays

Full steam ahead for luxury cruise liners

François Grosrichard

IRONICALLY, at a time when the hugely successful movie Titanic shows the famous liner sinking to a watery grave, the market in ocean liners is booming.

P&O, the British shipping firm, has just ordered two 2,600-berth liners from the Italian shipyard, Fincantieri, at $850 million each; 300 metres long and 36 metres wide, they will cruise at a speed of 22.5 knots.

A month earlier, the American group, Renaissance, announced it intended to have two ships built by Chantiers de l'Atlantique at Saint-Nazaire. In a few days, the Le Havre shipowners, Services et Transports, will send a letter of intent to the shipyards at Harfleur for two liners — they come in pairs — that will operate out of Tahiti.

These are heady times for cruise lines and shipyards, and all the more so because the Japanese and South Korean conglomerates, which are unbeatable at building oil tankers or ore carriers, have absolutely no foothold in the liner market.

Between 50 and 100 different trades are involved in constructing an ocean liner. It is a market dominated by Europeans, led by Italian and Finnish shipyards, with their German and French competitors not far behind.

Their order books now boast 30 luxury liners, and their schedules, in some cases, are full until 2001. This represents a huge amount of money: liners with more than 3,000 berths and resounding names such as Grand Princess, Paradise, Disney Magic, Vision of the Seas, Project Eagle and Superstar Virgo, are worth up to $500 million each.

The cruise market, which is dominated by American, Norwegian and British firms, has grown spectacularly. The number of passengers in Europe could well increase by 10 per cent a year between now and 2000, and by more in Asia.

This year 5.5 million North American cruise passengers, mainly from Miami, are expected to tour the Caribbean. Alongside the mammoth floating hotels, there is also room for small operators who offer more intimate and more mobile boats. That is a market niche that has been exploited by the Marseille-based group, Chambon.

There is lots of money to be spent and earned on the high seas. The thriving cruise lines often prefer to pay shipyards in cash rather than in instalments, which is customary in the rest of the shipping business.

Lord Sterling, the *pukkah* chairman of P&O, has quite unabashedly announced that the company's cruise sector generated profits of $255 million in 1997 and enjoyed profitability of 17 per cent.

(January 27)

Reform points to jobs rise

Laurent Mauduit

WHEN the French finance minister, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, recently presented the results of three studies by different institutions which all suggested that a 35-hour working week by 2000 would create a lot of jobs, he quipped: "I could have given you a million-job scenario if I'd wanted to."

His own ministry has forecast 600,000 new jobs by 2002, and he was implying by his remark that you can make figures say anything you want. His warning applies equally to the other two studies, carried out by the Observatoire Française des Conjonctures Economiques (Ofce) and the Banque de France, which forecast respectively that the 35-hour week will create 480,000 or 710,000 jobs in three years.

Even so, their conclusions cannot be lightly dismissed. The Ofce, though Keynesian and left-of-centre, is one of the most highly regarded independent bodies in France.

The Banque de France's conclusions do come as a surprise. Even though they were reached on the basis of hypotheses supplied by the employment ministry, France's central bank tends not to adopt a frivolous attitude towards policies that might endanger corporate competitiveness. Its simulations are all the more remarkable because the bank's governor, Jean-Claude Trichet, recently hinted that he had doubts about the benefits of a 35-hour week.

The second interesting feature of the two studies is that they offer almost exactly the same answer to a key question: who will pay for the reform? Both the Ofce and the Banque de France stress that it may cost the taxpayer nothing. Companies' labour costs, too, may not be affected. Only salaried employees will be required to make a financial sacrifice — but a sacrifice which the Ofce regards as reasonable.

Both institutions contend that asking people to work 35 hours for 35 hours' pay is antisocial and that remunerating 35 hours as though they were 39 does not make economic sense; but if a halfway-house solution were adopted, with people working 35 hours for 38 hours' pay, France could, they argue, achieve an appreciable rise in job creation.

The two studies will no doubt prompt further debate on the 35-hour week. They seem to corroborate the government's line. But they will not convince the right or the employers' federation to tone down their criticism of the shorter week.

It seems likely that the reform will have a much greater impact on employment than a lowering of employers' social security expenses, a solution traditionally advocated by the opposition. Most economists reckon that a fall of 10 billion francs ($1.6 billion) in social security charges would result in 10,000 new jobs a year, or 50,000 jobs over five years.

While these studies lend credence to the government's plan, they have the further merit of underlining the scale of the challenge facing French society. Always supposing that employers and trade unions play ball — which is hardly the case at the moment — the unemployment rate would drop by only 1 or 2 per cent. In other words, the notorious "social fracture" would hardly be reduced at all.

The economist Jean-Paul Fitoussi has put his finger on another fundamental question: can a reduction in working hours ever be a substitute for an economic policy designed to promote growth? Obviously not. But that raises another, even more complicated, issue: the 3 per cent growth forecast for 1998, on which the government has pinned its hopes, is just as speculative as any simulation of the effects of shorter working hours.

(January 22)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
February 8 1998

Donald MacLeod finds boarding schools optimistic about their continuing appeal to overseas students

Seoul searching

THE BURSAR of Ardingly College in West Sussex is currently the proud owner of 19 million Korean won. It is unusual, to say the least, for an English private boarding school to get involved in complicated currency deals but these are unusual times for the Tiger economies of the Far East and the people who work in them.

As the Korean exchange rate plummeted, the growing number of parents with children at British schools found the fees they owed had effectively doubled this term. In the case of parents with children at Ardingly they agreed to pay money into an account in their home country which is being held as security in the hope the exchange rate will improve and help them to meet the £4,470-a-term cost.

Tony Watson, the man responsible for the college's finances, said Ardingly would be patient in cases like this and help parents over a crisis so that their children could stay. In addition to three Koreans, the school has five Thais and nine Japanese pupils on its roll of 665. The school is concerned that Thailand's attempts to restrict currency export will cause problems.

Peter de Voil, headmaster of Frensham Heights, in Surrey, said the implications of the economic turmoil for their parents' jobs and standard of living was beginning to sink in among his Asian pupils. "One Korean boy is terribly worried. We are having to help out from our own funds to get him through GCSE," he said.

Inquiries were still coming in from countries such as Japan, but like a lot of other schools, Frensham Heights was looking to the developing market of South America for new overseas pupils, said Mr de Voil.

The growth of the number of pupils from the newly prosperous Pacific region attending British boarding schools over the past decade has been one byproduct of the Tiger phenomenon. Building on the old links with Hong Kong and Singapore, from where expatriates had traditionally sent their children to be educated in the old country, boarding schools have established themselves in a lucrative market — and one which is set to expand even more dramatically with the opening up of China to capitalism and Western trade.

Last year nearly 8,000 overseas pupils started at schools in Britain, 45 per cent of them from east Asia. Hong Kong is still the largest single source of students (1,585). For boarding schools the ability to tap into overseas markets has provided a much needed lifeline as boarding declined in popularity among British parents, and the numbers of service and expatriate families in overseas postings shrank along with the Empire.

The crash of Asian stock markets came as a nasty shock to public school head teachers, many of whom anxiously awaited the return of pupils from the Far East after the Christmas holidays. The immediate impact appears to be less than at first feared. Schools are being as flexible as they can and, as one headmaster remarked, parents tend to sell their homes and their Rolexes before they jeopardise their children's education.

Overseas students at Ardingly College: the Asian financial crisis has effectively raised school fees for many pupils PHOTO GARRY WEASER

David Woodhead, director of the Independent Schools Information Service (ISIS) which operates on behalf of 600 boarding schools, has just returned from education fairs in Hong Kong and Beijing feeling optimistic. The ISIS stall attracted as much attention from both Chinese and expatriate parents as in previous years.

The British Council, which promotes culture and education abroad, had identified three growth areas in Hong Kong — independent schools, summer schools and postgraduate courses. Undergraduate student numbers are expected to decline.

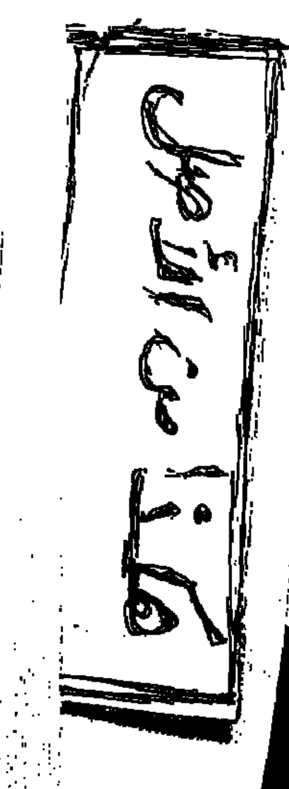
Ten years ago British independent schools had tended to concentrate on Hong Kong but were now anxious to diversify, said Mr Woodhead. "It is not just to avoid putting too many eggs in one basket from a financial point of view but to give the overseas contingent in the school a more varied look. Hong Kong parents are aware of the drawbacks of their child going to a school with too many other Hong Kong Chinese pupils. One of the overriding motivations is learning and improving their English. What they are buying is a British educational experience rather than a Hong Kong experience transported 7,000 miles away."

If the promise of fluency in English is the key attraction for Asian parents, schools also hold out the promise of going on to higher education in Britain. A recent survey by ISIS found that 70 per cent of overseas pupils leaving independent schools went on to higher education in the UK and a further 13 per cent to universities in their home countries.

Independent schools are holding their breath to see what the long-term impact of the economic turmoil in the region will have on their recruitment. Hong Kong and Japan look less likely to be seriously affected than Korea and Malaysia, where the government is trying to cut back on educational programmes and sponsorship, especially the number of students going abroad. In Korea the government has banned non-essential foreign travel, and the ministry of education has appealed to citizens to save foreign currency by not studying abroad.

British schools are looking increasingly to South America as a new market, but the big prize is mainland China. Mr Woodhead said the response at the Beijing education fair had been incredible with 30,000 visitors over two days. Partly it was the curiosity value that attracted people, in contrast to the sophisticated Hong Kong market, where parents know what they are looking for, but independent schools have been encouraged by the rapid growth of private schools in China to an estimated 50,000.

"New schools are springing up all over the place. If there is a growing number of parents getting used to paying fees in their own country it makes it easier to recruit them to the UK," said Mr Woodhead.



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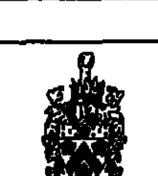
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Contact persons: Mr Andrew Kanime at (+264-61) 206-3151 or Ms Monica Heita at (+264-61) 206-3102.

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S6243/P702

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For the Communication Development programme the department contributes a range of communication related subjects including Papua New Guinea Languages and Communication; Negotiating Skills; Melanesian Society and Politics; Media Studies, Language in Society; Principles of Translation and Interpretation, Conflict, Origins and Resolution; Public and Community Relations, Critical Thinking; Training, Education and Society; Communicating with Landowners, Employees and Management; Social Change; Technology and Society; Development Studies; and Study and Communication Skills.

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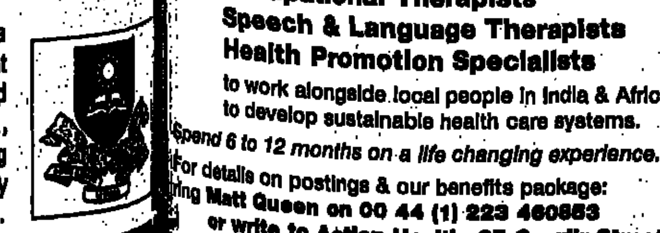
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UNHCR encourages qualified women to apply. The UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva is a smoke-free environment. Because of the number of applications expected, acknowledgments will only be sent to short-listed candidates under serious consideration.

Aberystwyth

Postgraduate Studies in International Politics

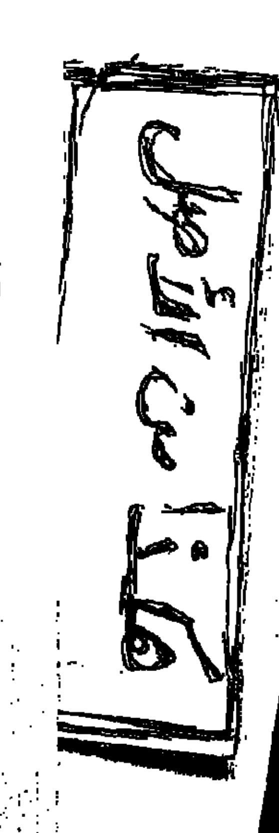
The Department of International Politics is the oldest of its kind in the world and one of the largest in Europe. The award of a 5A in the 1996 Research Assessment Exercise demonstrates its continued excellence in research. A key aspect of our strategy for the future is to expand further our already vibrant postgraduate community. The Department invests significant financial resources in graduate support, such as providing office space and networked computer work stations. Library facilities are amongst the best in the UK.

Research: The Department has 'Mode A' status from the ESRC for its PhD programme and has recently been very successful in securing awards for quality candidates. All research applications received before 20 February will be considered for ESRC, Departmental and University studentships.

Masters Programmes: The Department has five Masters programmes. MScEcon Strategic Studies and MScEcon International Politics have 3 fully funded ESRC studentships each. MScEcon International History, MScEcon Politics of the European Union, and MScEcon Intelligence and Strategic Studies have fully funded or partially funded awards. Our established programmes are available as Specialist or Research Training degrees. The Department received the grade of 'Excellent' for its Masters courses in the 1996 Teaching Quality Assessment exercise. Deadline for applications for funding 20 April.

For further details: The Postgraduate Secretary, Dept. of International Politics, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3DA.
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Drifter risks life beneath ocean wave

Jon Henley in Paris

WHAT challenges are left when you have already sailed 300,000 miles across all the seas known to man, flown from Africa to Brazil in a powered hang-glider and doggy-paddled halfway across the Atlantic attached to a small raft?

Piece of cake, really. You lower yourself 8 metres below the water's surface into a cramped capsule where the temperature is 29C and the humidity 100 per cent. Then you spend 70 days drifting across the Indian Ocean with no means of propulsion and nothing to do but look at fish.

Guy Delage deserves a medal for services to insanity. His latest adventure, Mission Oxygen, set off this month from the island of Weh, near Sumatra. Wind and currents permitting, it will end in early April off the coast of Sri Lanka, when Delage hopes to become the pioneer of an entirely new profession: the world's first pelagic lab attendant.

There is a scientific point to all this: "It's to do with the euphotic fringe — the upper 20 metres of the ocean's surface," Delage explained before setting off. "The main interchanges that regulate the entire biological cycle occur here: the absorption of CO_2, the production by phytoplankton of 75 to 80 per cent of the oxygen we breathe. The future of the planet is at stake here, but we know very little about it."

His craft, the Ocean Observer, is a 5m cabin containing a hatch, two port-holes, two bunks, a basic toilet, a microwave oven and a few navigational instruments. It is suspended by straps from a 9m raft which houses solar panels, communications aerials, wind-power generators and oxygen and water supplies.



Guy Delage creates a stir after his last exploit PHOTOGRAPH: AP

Below the capsule hangs a 12-ton weight designed to provide stability — and make absolutely sure the whole assembly is the slowest and most inefficient means of crossing an ocean yet devised. Its top speed, buffeted by gale-force winds, is 6kph, but Delage hopes to make a more sedate one knot. That's when he's not moving backwards.

Sponsored by a French cosmetics firm that uses plankton in its regenerating creams and a sports watch manufacturer, the project will be followed by two separate teams of scientists who will hang on every word sent back from the Ocean Observer via the Cité des Sciences institute outside Paris.

The first team is intrigued by the marine research possibilities of an undersea observatory that, unlike research ships or fixed underwater stations, drifts along with the mass of water that contains it. Each day Delage will observe, photograph, take notes and collect samples from what some scientists call "the Earth's blue lung" — marine bacteria, phytoplankton, zooplankton, jellyfish and fish.

The second group of scientists is more interested in the physical and mental effects on Delage. Two doctors in Toulouse will examine the consequences of long-term sleep deprivation and stress on the human body, while another team will concentrate on how he reacts to spending more than two months under constant atmospheric pressure and in a saturated environment.

The risks are considerable, as he is keen to point out. The fragile craft will be at the mercy of the weather, and any passing freighter represents potential disaster. But the principal danger is decompression sickness — during his daily trips up to the raft to dry off from the oppressive humidity, breathe fresh air and stabilise his blood system, Delage risks contracting the bends.

"It's a bubble that lodges in the brain," he said. "A neurological accident, and absolutely incurable. But every time I get worried, I just think about my flight across the equatorial Atlantic in an ultralight. Scientists put the chances of me coming out of that alive at 33 per cent."

Extreme expeditions are a way of life for this man, now a controversial figure in France. He says he feels, at times, like a "mutant organism". So is he mad? "Just curious," he said. "Insatiably curious."

Sounds about right . . .

IT CAN tell Diet Coke from the Real Thing, distinguish sour milk from fresh and spot the difference between claret and burgundy — without opening a bottle, *writes Robin McKie*.

More importantly, the sound-imaging device developed by United States scientists at the Los Alamos laboratory can tell — from the outside — whether an artillery shell is filled with ordinary explosive or deadly nerve gas. An operator merely attaches a couple of electronic crystals to a container. One sets off a series of acoustic pulses and the other picks these up and converts them into electrical signals that are analysed by computer.

The process takes less than half a minute to produce an acoustic signature of a vessel's contents, be it coffee or nerve agent. Crucially, the container remains sealed as this "sound X-ray" is created. "Our machine can identify liquids or compounds without touching them," said scientist Dr Kendal Sinclair. "We can tell Coke from the diet version, purely from its acoustic properties."

The sound analyser is expected to have wide industrial and domestic uses. More than a dozen patents have been taken out. Prototype versions are being built, and licence agreements have been signed with pharmaceutical, semiconductor and chemical companies, as well as brewers and food manufacturers.

"There is an enormous number of uses for this device," said project leader Dr Dipen Sinha. "US customs officers want to use it to combat drug smuggling, for example. Smugglers often dissolve drugs in fluids like acetone, sometimes in huge tankers. Our machine can tell in less than half a minute if narcotics have been added."

Studying the physical characteristics of a substance by bombarding it with sound waves is not new. Scientists have used the method for several years, but the development of powerful new computing techniques has made it significantly easier. "We generate acoustic signals over an entire sound spectrum," said Dr Sinha. "These reveal physical properties of a substance — density, viscosity and other parameters."

The sound sensor, known as a "swept frequency acoustic interferometer", has been developed by Los Alamos for the US Defence Special Weapons Agency. Within two months, after it has completed its trials, the agency will offer it for use in monitoring the current International Chemical Warfare Convention. Inspectors will be able to discover if stockpiled shells contain standard explosives, or banned nerve gases or poisons.

The device's industrial uses are causing even greater excitement, for the technique could be used to monitor manufacturing processes to ensure industrial solutions are maintained at correct strengths and beers properly fermented, and to analyse cleaning fluids used in the semiconductor industry.

"We can identify or analyse virtually anything you can think of using sound waves," said Dr Sinha. "We can spot milk that has gone off without opening the packet. I could even tell one wine from another if only people would send me a few crates so I could standardise my readings."
— *The Observer*



Hell and high water: Flood refugees in northeast Kenya are sitting targets for diseases carried by water and insects

Kenya revisited by the plague

Global climate change is spawning deadly epidemics. **Fred Pearce** reports on how unseasonal rainfall has brought terror to Kenya

FOR the second time in six months, the world is glimpsing the health consequences of escalating climate change. After triggering the choking havoc of smoke from Indonesian forest fires last autumn, the worst El Niño for 50 years has in the past two months unleashed plagues of disease across east Africa in the wake of unprecedented dry-season rains and floods.

Cholera and malaria have claimed record numbers of victims across Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Somalia. Pests, such as a toxic insect known as the Nairobi fly, have proliferated. Locusts may be on the way. But most frightening of all comes an outbreak of Rift Valley Fever, a cattle disease that has decimated herds across eastern Kenya and southern Somalia and jumped the species barrier to kill hundreds of humans. It attacks with such ferocity that medics at first feared an outbreak of anthrax, and now speculate that they may have seen the emergence of a new super-strain of the virus that could take permanent residence in humans.

Rains in parts of Kenya in the past month have been 20 times normal. El Niño, a climatic convulsion in the Pacific, has warped tropical weather fronts around the globe and left a band of intense rain, known as the inter-tropical convergence zone, over the country for weeks on end.

News reports in Kenya have concentrated on floods in Nairobi and the severing of the country's main highway to Mombasa. But the real havoc has been caused in the northeast — a vast, normally arid land of cattle herders which has effectively been cut off by floods for more than two months now.

Just before Christmas, news began to filter out of thousands of cattle deaths and a mysterious "bleeding disease" among humans. Louise Martin, an American disease consultant with the World Health Organisation in Nairobi, first flew out to the stricken villages on Christmas Eve with helicopters bringing food aid.

This latterday Santa Claus mission found the children were not sleeping quietly in their beds. "They were living, huddled with their animals, on small patches of dry land. They had no clean water and little food except for their diseased animals," recalls Martin.

Victims of the bleeding disease, at first concentrated in the districts of Garissa and Wajir, were struck down literally overnight. They became delirious, began bleeding from ears, nose and mouth and died within hours. "I watched one 14-year-old girl, the same age as my own daughter, dying before my eyes," says Martin.

Samples of blood collected by Martin and analysed in South Africa and Kenya revealed the Rift Valley Fever virus in both animals and humans. Last month the International Red Cross said the virus had killed "more than 450 people" so far and remained out of control. With dozens of settlements in the flooded region still not contacted, Martin refuses to be drawn on the death toll. Some suggest several thousand may be dead. And things could be even worse over the border in Somalia, a land without any form of central government.

The disease has invaded a rural population without medical help and already severely weakened by malnutrition, TB, malaria and a range of parasitic diseases. The death rate from the disease appeared to be around 50 per cent in humans and even higher in animals.

"One family I met had a herd of 200 goats one week, and only four left the next," recalls Martin.

The virus spreads among animals via mosquitoes, rather like malaria. But, according to John Githule, human disease specialist at the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (Icipe) at Kasarani, outside Nairobi, transmission is much faster.

The disease was first identified in 1931 in the Rift Valley in Kenya — hence its name. Until now, the largest known outbreak in humans was in Egypt during floods in 1977, when 600 people died. Some researchers have suggested the virus could have been responsible for Biblical plagues in Egypt.

Humans, like animals, can be infected via mosquitoes. "The mosquitoes prefer to bite livestock, but will bite humans as a second best," says Donald Klaucke, the WHO's acting head in Nairobi. But he believes that human epidemics are largely caused by eating infected meat. Either way, with humans and animals huddled together against the floods, animal carcasses the only available food, and standing water causing an explosion in the numbers of mosquito, the people of northeastern Kenya are a sitting target.

The Kenyan government, only recently getting back to work after the December elections, appears uninterested in the crisis. The country's most respected newspaper, the Nation, complained last month that the government had yet to broadcast even basic advice to affected villages on how to minimise their risk of catching the disease. The Red Cross claimed the army had refused to provide helicopters to reach the stricken zone.

On January 14, at a meeting with the health ministry, Martin and WHO officials recommended immediate vaccination to prevent further spread of the disease among livestock. The Red Cross agreed. With the country holding stocks of vaccine for 300,000 animals there need have been no delay. But 10 days later, with reports of the disease spreading west and south, reaching the Magadi district just 50km from Nairobi, no decision on vaccination had been taken, says Martin.

Despite initial reports to the contrary, there is a human vaccine. It was developed secretly by the United States army in 1967 as part of experiments into the use of tropical diseases as biological weapons. The vaccine is offered to laboratory staff working with the disease, but according to Klaucke, has never been licensed for wider use. "The matter is a bit sensitive," says a US army spokesman, without elaborating.

Whatever its original motivation, military research into exotic diseases could prove increasingly valuable. Hans Herren, director of Icipe, is in no doubt that remote regions such as northeastern Kenya could act as reservoirs for exotic diseases that could suddenly break out of their existing ecological niches because of changing climate. In effect, humans could inadvertently unleash biological warfare on themselves.

"Global warming will lead to vectors such as mosquitoes spreading to new areas and becoming more active," says Herren. Who knows what they may bring with them. Such epidemics may happen suddenly. And with many governments in Africa and elsewhere imploding, crippled by corruption and unable to keep either roads or hospitals open for business, the conditions for the return of major epidemids and the incubation of diseases new to humanity could hardly be better.

Disease on the march

[illegible]

Method in his music

OBITUARY
Shinichi Suzuki

SHINICHI SUZUKI, who has died aged 99, was a remarkable teacher — an educator and musician who originated and developed the Suzuki method of teaching very young children to play musical instruments, inspiring devotion among generations of children, their parents and teachers around the world.

He realised that as most very young children can master their own language, other complex skills, such as music, can be learned by all children at an early age. His pupils, who tend to start at the age of three, learn to play by ear first. Learning to read music comes later. Aptitude was a term that Suzuki felt could be applied to each and every child, given encouragement.

Suzuki shared many of these musical and educational ideas with other great music educators, such as Carl Orff and Zoltán Kodály, but his greatness lay in his unerring ability to establish a rapport with the shyest child in any gathering — helped by the constant supplies of chocolate and biscuits he kept in his pockets.

Suzuki was born in Nagoya, Japan, in October 1898, the son of a violin manufacturer. In his youth he was a champion baseball player, but after teaching himself to play the violin, he was encouraged by the Marquis Tokugawa to continue his music studies in Berlin, where he became a pupil of the eminent violinist Karl Klinger. Albert Einstein was Suzuki's guardian during this period. It was the start of a lifelong friendship between the mathematician and Suzuki, cemented by long bouts of chamber music together.

Suzuki, who spent eight years in Germany, also met his future wife Waltraud Prange, a concert singer, in Berlin. In 1928 he converted to Catholicism and they married. They returned to Japan where Suzuki was appointed to the Imperial School of Music, and became the first concert violinist in his country as well as forming a quartet with his brothers.

It was at this time that he first developed his then revolutionary and child-centred theories about teaching music. By the 1960s, Suzuki's reputation as an educator had spread beyond Japan to America, Europe and Australia. In later years he travelled extensively and was able to see his principles adapted for other musical instruments, notably piano and flute. He addressed the United Nations and received many awards, notably the Order of the Rising Sun and the Bundesverdzinst-Kreuz in Germany.

Throughout his life, Waltraud's support was unbounded and a constant grounding to his inspiration and idealism. Much to their sorrow they were unable to have children, although after the war they informally adopted Koji Toyoda, who is now concert master of the Berlin Symphony Orchestra.

Shinichi Suzuki was a genius, combining simplicity, humour and kindness with great wisdom and respect for everyone.

Anne Turner

Shinichi Suzuki, music teacher, born October 17, 1898; died January 26, 1998

Well met by torchlight

Mark Cocker

I WANTED to able to write that my friend is a wild goose chaser but, in fact, it's wild ducks he goes after. However, if it doesn't have quite the same ring, it is still one of the more unusual job titles I have come across.

It involves a largely nocturnal lifestyle: starting at six o'clock each evening and taking a four-wheel-drive vehicle along a network of country tracks to scare wigeon off the coastal farms of central north Norfolk. Large numbers of this duck migrate to Britain during autumn from breeding grounds in Scandinavia and Siberia, and flocks totalling about 13,000 pass the winter steadily grazing their way across the region's marshes. While they are eating just grass there is really no conflict. The problems arise if the ducks move from cattle pasture to winter-sown cereals, when they can inflict substantial damage.

Local farmers receive compensatory payments for these losses, but it is cheaper to pay somebody to prevent the damage in the first place, and this is where a duck chaser comes in. Following a regular beat each night, he locates the troublesome birds and evicts them with the use of a powerful torch. On really dark moonless nights it is a relatively short shift. But it is also cold and rather lonely. Except for the odd, mistaken pursuit by the police, or occasional couples who make a somewhat embarrassing choice of quiet country lane to do their courting, there are few diversions.

It is when he describes his regular wildlife encounters — the barn owls ghosting over marshes glazed with frost, the inky silhouettes of wild geese sailing across the face of an enormous moon, or woodcock, elusive nocturnal waders, which become immobilised if caught in the car headlights — that I begin to feel the slightest twinge of envy. But then he describes the impact of a full moon, when the ducks are able to feed most actively and force him into gruelling 12-hour shifts, that I give thanks for the desk job.

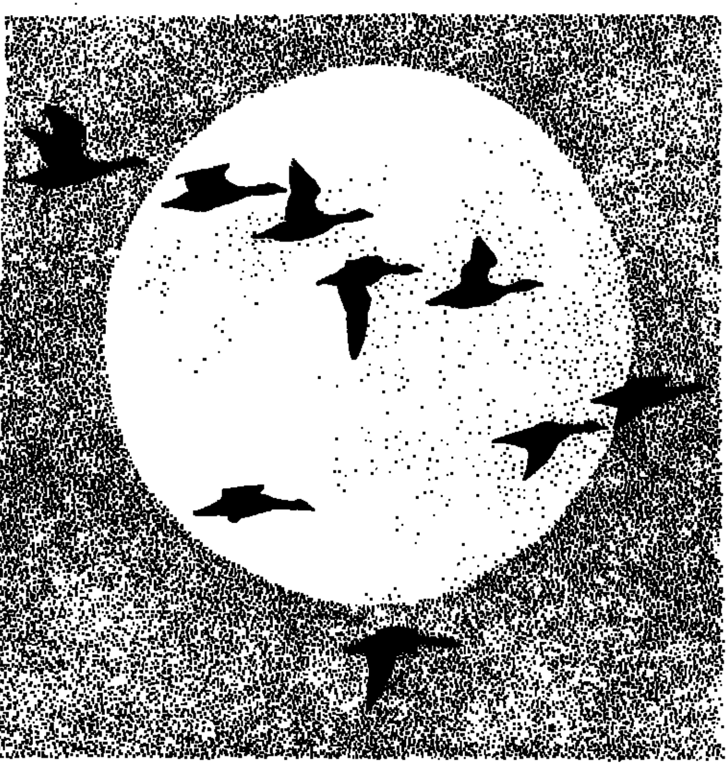


ILLUSTRATION: ANN HOBDAY

That my friend doesn't actually have to chase wild geese is rather ironic, since north Norfolk is one of their most important wintering areas in Europe, and they will also feed on winter-sown cereals just like wigeon. The species involved is the pink-footed goose, whose entire breeding range involves just three Arctic areas: Greenland, Iceland, and Svalbard.

Almost all the birds from Greenland and Iceland winter in Britain and have reached a new Norfolk peak this year of 75,000, about a third of the world population. As remarkable as this huge total is the way they have steadily increased over the years, more than tripling in the past 10 years, probably because of better protection in the wintering areas. These ever-rising goose numbers are one of Britain's great environmental success stories and perhaps offer a glimpse of what must have been a staggering abundance of wildfowl in East Anglia before the invention of firearms.

Despite heavily outnumbering the wigeon, the geese usually have a much smaller impact on local agriculture for several reasons. First, they have a wider vegetable diet and as well as cattle pasture they graze old brassicas, left-over potatoes, sugar beet tops and spilt cereal. Unlike wigeon, which feed in a concentrated area, the geese spread their impact by ranging over much large stretches of coastal Norfolk. In fact observations of pink-footed geese in Lancashire have led to speculation that these birds may make excursions to feed in Norfolk, then return to roost in the Northwest. If this were the case, then it involves a day trip of almost 700km.

Chess Leonard Barden

ANATOLY KARPOV is still Fide world champion, but only after one of the most error-strewn matches ever seen in title play. The 46-year-old Russian defeated Vishy Anand 5-3 at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, winning two tie-break games at speed chess, which is his Indian opponent's speciality.

Karpov won game one by an opening novelty bomb, but let the match slip in game two, where he missed a forced win, and again in game six, where he gave away a piece. Anand started the tie-break as favourite and was a pawn up in game seven; then he collapsed, blundering into a lost endgame, before a wild coffee-house attack failed in the decisive game eight.

Anand v Karpov, 8th game

1 d4 d5 2 Bg5 h6 3 Bh4 c6 4 Nf3 Qb6 5 b3 Bf5 6 e3 Nd7 7 Bd3 Bxd3 8 Qxd3 e6 The solid defence which defeated Julian Hodgson in the world team championship.

9 c4 Ne7 Black is comfortable, but still has to decide whether to play Nf5xh4 and which side to castle; so White can be non-committal with 0-0 and Nc3. Instead ... **10 c5?! Qa5+ 11 Nc3 b6 12 b4?** 12 cxb6 axb6 gives Black a Q-side initiative, but this desperate gambit would only make sense if Karpov castled long.

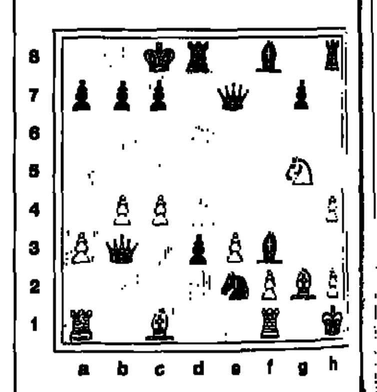
Qxb4 13 0-0 Nf5 14 Rfc1? bxc5 15 Rab1 c4 A simple refutation. **16 Qc2 Qa5 17 Rb7 Qa6 18 Rcb1 Bd6 19 e4 Nxh4 20 Nxh4 Rb8** As advised in books for beginners, exchange pieces when you are ahead. **21 Rxb8+ Bxb8 22 exd5 cxd5 23 Ng6** Sacrificing a knight for three harmless pawns and a few checks, but otherwise Black's extra pawns win.

fxg6 24 Qxg6+ Kd8 25 Qxg7 Re8 26 Qxh6 Qa5 27 Qg5+ Kc8 28 Qg6 Rf8 29 Rc1 Qb6 30 Ne2 e5 31 Qh5 Qf6 32 Rf1 Rh8 33 Resigns If 33 Qg4 exd4 threatens Bxh2+. It was the worst final game in a world championship match since Zukertort blundered his queen against Steinitz in 1886.

Afterwards Karpov attributed his opponent's poor play to "tension rather than fatigue", while Garry Kasparov dismissed the match as between "a tired player and a weak player". Anand's play at the end recalls his collapse against Kamsky at Sanghi Naghar 1994, after Kasparov won the tenth game in New York 1995, and even his missed forced mate against Karpov in 1991. The cool Indian can choke at big moments against ex-Soviets.

World number one Kasparov has not played a title match since 1995, and he recently admitted that his break from Fide in 1993 was a mistake. So the next move looks to be the sixth Kasparov-Karpov match, this time for a unified world championship. But what chess really needs is a credible Western challenger, and the Groningen knock-out showed that Michael Adams is the best available. If the laid-back British number one could work seriously on his primitive opening repertoire and aim more ambitiously for top places in super-tournaments, he could yet have his chance.

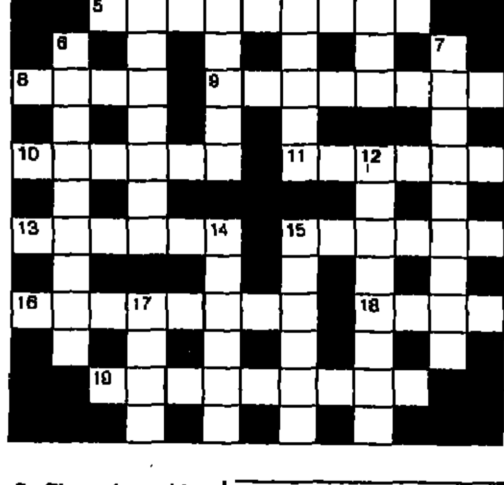
No 2509



R Ligneli v A Niemela, Finland 1997. Players who like the Albin Counter Gambit 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e5 will recognise this diagram as what can occur when White misplays this high-risk opening. How did Black (to move) win quickly?

No 2508: 1 ... Qg5 2 Qe1 f5! takes the initiative and exploits the traffic jam of white pieces.

Quick crossword no. 404



Across

5 Hebrew prophet of the 7th century BC — OT book (9)
8 Pivot on which wheel turns (4)
9 OT book of wise sayings (8)
10 Biblical survivor of the lions' den — OT book (6)
11 Second book of the OT — departure (6)
13 OT book — Queen of Persia (6)
15 Next to (6)
16 OT book — leader of Jerusalem's rebuilding (8)
18 OT book — daughter-in-law of Naomi (4)
19 One playing practical jokes (9)

Down

1 OT book — person prophesying doom (8)
2 Place of worship (6)
3 Sing in plainsong (6)
4 Lot (4)
6 Tired out (9)
7 Foolishness (9)
12 Spectator (8)
14 Rules (6)
15 Command (6)
17 OT book — Jewish priest 5th century BC (4)

Last week's solution

SPRUCE AISLE
T E O M U A
PILLAR CAMPUS
L I K S P T
ETNA SEASHORE
E N C N R R
DETERIORATE
S C R N R R
CASTAWAY SURE
R T T M E A
AMAZON ORNATE
W S L U A U
LOYAL ASYLUM

Bridge Zia Mahmood

ONE of the best punchlines I've ever read in a bridge book — or any book, for that matter — must be in the latest offering by Robert King and Phillip King, titled Your Deal, Mr Bond. Like their previous works, the book is an anthology of stories in the style of famous writers.

In Frankenstein's Bridge Partner, an alien kidnaps six bridge players who excel at different areas of the game. By synthesising their brains, the alien will create the perfect partner. As in the original Frankenstein, the whole thing goes horribly wrong and a bridge monster is born instead. At the end, the alien cowers in terror as his creation rises and extends his hand with the dreaded words: "Hello, my name is Tony Forrester."

Easy reading, a wonderful gift for parody, great humour and fascinating bridge hands make the Kings far and away the best writing team on the bridge scene. And I would say this even if I didn't feature in the leading story!

James Bond is summoned by M, who briefs him on the latest threat to world peace. The crazed Saladin is about to unleash the customary arsenal of weapons on an unsuspecting world. The only way to stop Saladin is to penetrate his island fortress by capitalising on his love of bridge.

He is in the habit of inviting the world's top players to the island for challenge matches, so Bond must disguise himself as ... well, let's just call him Z. Communicating by concealed radio transmitter with an offshore submarine, Secret Agent 007 is able to find the killing bids and plays to defeat Saladin and save the planet.

This is an example — see if you can find the right line of play in six spades to thwart the villain:

South (007)	North (dummy)
♠ AKQJ109	♠ 8
♥ A932	♥ KJ
♦ Q3	♦ A6
♣ 6	♣ AJ875432

This has been the bidding:

South	West	North	East
			5♦
5♠	Pass	6♣	Pass
6♠	D'ble	Pass	Pass
Pass			

West leads the king of clubs. You play the ace from dummy, and East discards a diamond. How do you plan the play? This is the full deal:

	North	
	♠ 8	
	♥ KJ	
	♦ A6	
	♣ AJ875432	
West		**East**
♠ 765432		♠ None
♥ Q106		♥ 8754
♦ None		♦ KJ10987542
♣ KQ109		♣ None
	South	
	♠ AKQJ109	
	♥ A932	
	♦ Q3	
	♣ 6	

When East does not ruff the ace of clubs, the position is virtually double dummy. To succeed, you must find West with precisely Q10x of hearts, and you must also be able to get back to your hand after drawing trumps and finessing in hearts. So, you draw trumps in six rounds discarding dummy's ace of diamonds! Then, after a heart to the jack and the king of hearts, you lead the six of diamonds from the dummy, and East must allow you access to your red-suit winners. Did you make the world safe for democracy?

Letter from Cairo Greg Spice

Charity of fallen angels

DURING the holy month of Ramadan Muslims make a serious effort to deny themselves sensual pleasures in order to get closer to God. From sunrise to sunset, for the duration of the month, smoking, drinking of liquids of any kind, eating and engaging in sexual contact are all prohibited. In public at least, most of the country makes an earnest display of self-denial and brotherly/sisterly love.

The vast majority of Egyptians are good-natured and emphatically non-violent. During the holy month everyone seems to make an even greater effort to be particularly considerate and caring. This, in spite of the shredded nerves of a whole country undergoing mass nicotine and caffeine withdrawal and the composure-shattering chaos of Cairo's horn-blaring, gridlocked traffic.

One of the enduring traditions of the holy month is that wealthy citizens pay for tables to be set out in the streets, to which the poor are invited to share a lavish meal as the whole country breaks its day-long fast. By feeding the poor, the wealthy are punting on greater rewards when they get to heaven. It is a tradition dating back a thousand years to the time of the Fatimids, when the Caliphs used to provide the needy with food in their palaces.

Over the past few weeks bemused Cairenes have been treated to the spectacle of affluent businessmen, film stars and entertainers trying to outdo one another to see who can provide the most generous spread. One of them, at whose table a place is much sought-after by the city's hungry legions, is the famous belly dancer, Fifi Abdoo.

Ms Abdoo is very wealthy, having practised her art for many years. This has mostly involved dancing for specially organised parties, at which men from all over the Middle East vie with one another in showering her person with large-denomination US dollar bills — such is the intoxication of the Abdoo belly, the gyrations of the Abdoo hips and the accompanying music of traditional wind, horn and drum orchestra.

Lately, though, a controversy has threatened to jeopardise Ms Abdoo's heavenly rewards as well as the more earthly hospitality she offers to the underprivileged hundreds each evening of Ramadan. A number of Muslim scholars have denounced the abundance of her table as ill-gotten. They argue that a belly dancer's money is sinful; that people who eat at her table are sharing in this sin because it is encouraging Ms Abdoo to continue practising her particular brand of dirty dancing.

The controversy has dominated newspaper gossip columns and conversation in salons and souks up and down the Nile. The reason for the intense interest lies in the ambivalent role played by belly dancers in Egyptian society. While there seems to be a sort of reverence for them, they are at the same time considered shameful — a bit like much-loved fallen angels.

Until about 10 years ago most women in Egypt's cities and towns had adopted Western dress habits. Now the trend is being reversed. Most women do not go out in public unless at least their heads are covered with a scarf, and increasingly unless their faces are fully covered. So while the culture clothes its wives and daughters in the fabric of sainted maidens, there is great demand for women willing to shed the fabric, bare their bellies and titillate the men with the art of their dance.

Most of the dancers come from the city's slums. When some attain fame and fortune, their rags-to-riches stories are heavily romanticised by the Egyptian media. But since the culture judges them essentially immoral, they are always portrayed as tragic figures. The compromise is to sentimentalise them; typically as whores with hearts of gold.

THE conservatives who decry Ms Abdoo's charity as tainted lack popular support. Most people seem to agree with Egypt's Grand Imam, Sheikh Tantawi, the country's principal authority on religious matters. He publicly countered the conservatives' claims by emphasising the importance in Islam of the idea that whoever helps the poor will be rewarded by God. It was not for others, he said, to judge the means by which those such as Ms Abdoo had acquired their wealth.

Ms Abdoo has so far kept her own counsel. But the diners are speaking for her. As one young woman put it last week, as she gathered up her children from the dancer's table: "Most of the people who come here are really hungry. Isn't it right in the sight of God to spend money on such people in a country where a quarter of the nation is poor? I say she deserves the blessings of Allah a thousand times over."

A Country Diary

Vernon Mullen

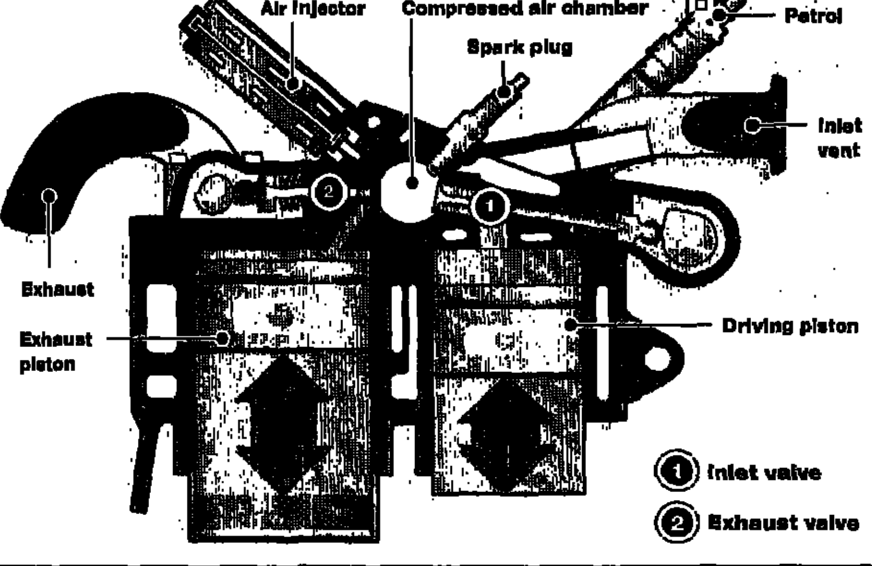
OTTAWA, ONTARIO: The main beneficiaries of the Great Ice Storm of 1998 in eastern Ontario and southern Quebec have been the rabbits.

At sunrise I made my usual trek through a strip of swampy bush running between the railway yard and a busy street. My path was covered in ice-coated tree tops and branches.

Rabbit tracks peppered the soft layer of snow that rested on a crust thick enough to bear my weight. The rabbits had gathered overnight among the fallen willow and poplar branches to feast on tender tips, much more appetising than the rough bark of the lower branches that they would reach in a normal winter.

Sadly, I saw no signs of grey partridge *(Perdrix perdrix)* among the weed-heads that protrude through the snow. This introduced species, sometimes called Hungarian partridge, has adapted well to Canadian winters. But the birds' habit of burrowing into soft snow at night has proved fatal this winter, when freezing rain has left a heavy crust through which they cannot break.

Today I saw just a chickadee and a crow, but I did hear the cheerful whistle of a cardinal. In the snow the tracks of a red fox had circled the area where the rabbits had dined.



Engine is 'kick-started' using an air-petrol mixture as in a normal engine. Once up and running the petrol supply is cut and the car runs on compressed air alone.

A car with a healthy air

Paul Webster in Paris

A FRENCH engineer has invented an urban car that runs only on the air around us. The first ZP taxi — ZP stands for zero pollution — will be unveiled in Provence later this month before going into mass production in Mexico.

The inventor, Guy Negre, opened his engine laboratory at Brignoles in the Var three years ago to perfect a motor that runs on a tankful of compressed air. In urban road trials, his air-driven engine mounted in a Citroen AX chassis ran for 10 hours with a top speed of about 100kmh. That is a better performance than any electric car in production.

The Mexican version of the vehicle was designed by an Italian company and resembles a small family saloon with a separate compartment for the driver and four seats at the back.

A Mexican government licensee, Dina, has signed a contract to produce an estimated 40,000 ZP taxis and urban delivery vehicles a year. It hopes to replace all of Mexico City's 87,000 petrol and diesel taxis.

Mr Negre, who worked on high-performance and Formula One engines for 30 years, runs his business, CQFD Air Solution, with his son, who is a former Bugatti engineer, and 16 employees just off the Mediterranean motorway to Nice.

His silent, odour-free engine design was chosen for the world's most polluted city after a worldwide search by the Mexican authorities that included tests on dozens of electric and other non-polluting experimental vehicles.

"My car was the only one totally dependent on compressed air for city running," says Mr Negre. "Compressed air is used to start Formula One cars but in this case the compressed air is the fuel driving a motor with classic components such as pistons and valves. But it is much lighter than the average engine."

Sixteen patents have been taken out to cover an integrated system in which 300 litres of compressed air can be pumped into the tank under high pressure in three minutes. The car can also be refuelled at home in four hours by a small compressor in the car linked to the house electricity supply. While the air is free, the electricity used to refuel the tank at home would cost less than $2.

The car is being studied by other countries, including the Netherlands, because it can also clean up air that has been polluted by petrol vehicles.

"One of the vehicle's advantages is the carbon filtering system, which means that the car sucks in the polluted surrounding air during braking and then breathes out purified air," says Mr Negre.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHY can't we all just love each other?

BECAUSE some people come from Sunderland. — *Ian Wright, Newcastle*

WOMEN can, but men need a rest in between, so it would take too long. — *Robert Norris, Crewe, Cheshire*

WHY is the Star of David sometimes found on the gates to Hindu temples?

THE hexagram (six-pointed star) is one of the earliest symbols and has been found on artefacts that certainly predate its association with Judaism. The hexagram only began to be used in synagogues in the late Middle Ages; its association with the term "Star of David" probably derives from its use in the Kabalah as the Shield of David, a magical symbol of protection. — *Mark Cohen, Sheffield*

IT MAY have been a *yantra* rather than a star of David, or the star of David may have been suggested by a yantra. Yantras are mystic diagrams used in meditation. They consist of letters and geometric figures and the best-known comprises nine interlocking triangles, symbolising the multi-dimensional manifestations of male/female cosmic power known as *Shiva-Shakti.* — *(Dr) Eleanor Nesbitt, Warwick university, Coventry*

THEY say something will cost the earth. If I were an alien, how much could I expect to be invoiced if I were to purchase it?

WITH no current alien trade it is not possible to establish a meaningful exchange rate for the alien currency. Our history suggests that the alien equivalent of a few beads and some blankets should do it. One might worry about who now has title to the planet and is therefore in a position to sell it. But again our history suggests that the alien purchaser will decide title to the Earth according to their own laws. — *Guy Smith, Vancouver, Canada*

HOW fast would I have to travel to avoid being captured by a speed camera?

I RECOMMEND 200kmh. On my regular trips to London I do this most of the way, while reading a book. After a few pints of beer I come back at a similar speed, often dozing off. I have never been caught by a camera and my licence is not in danger because I don't have one. The transport I use is very economical, too — about 10p a mile. — *Adam Sowan, Reading, Berkshire*

RICHARD HARVEY'S answer (February 1) overlooks the fact that the camera takes two photographs in quick succession as the vehicle passes over a set of white lines on the road. These lines cover, say, 10 metres, and the camera probably has a 1/500th of a second shutter speed which is adequate to take a nice clear picture of the number plate. To cover 10 metres in less than 1/500th of a second would require travelling at a mere 45,000kmh. — *John Brice, Essex university, Colchester*

IS IT better to be intelligent or well-educated?

WITH an MBA, it's possible to be neither — *Tim Goodman, Sydney, Australia*

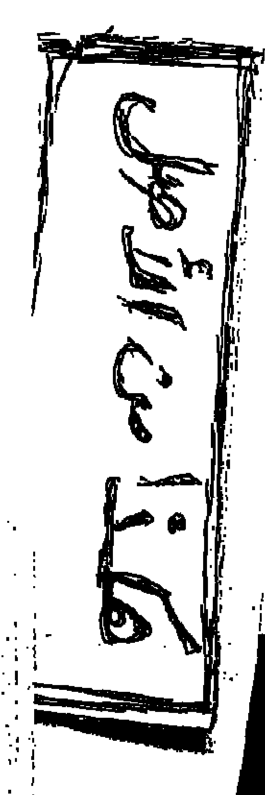
Any answers?

IS IT illegal to fight a duel if both parties agree to the risks? — *Fergus Mitchell, Glasgow*

IS THERE a sure way to crack eggs without breaking the yolk? — *T Milford, Isle of Wight*

IS THERE any advantage in having traffic lights which include amber rather than switching straight from red to green? — *Peter Hanson, London*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/



How to get half a life

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

ALWAYS judge a book by its cover. Much the safest guide is the name of the writer on the spine. Laurence Marks and Maurice Gran, even with four feet between them, find it hard to put one wrong. They wrote Birds Of A Feather and Goodnight Sweetheart, and their new series, *Unfinished Business* (BBC1), is a wonderful piece of work.

The BBC calls it adult comedy, which is code for rude. What is really adult about it is the accelerating speed and precision of the rallies between Spike (Henry Goodman) and Amy (Harriet Walter), which remind you of Tracy and Hepburn.

Amy and Spike meet after a 10-year divorce, when they crash in a carwash. Their lives seem a multiple pile-up. He left her for the pneumatic Delphine and now Delphine has left him.

"Let me guess!" says Amy ecstatically. "He found her in bed with a younger man! I bet he didn't know she had it in her." It has always seemed to me that Harriet Walter can shake her skin like a horse, because fluid expressions race across her face.

Amy is flip, self-mocking, ironic. She protects herself with a withering fire of words, making a joke of her disasters. As her life is full of disaster, that makes for plenty of jokes. Try some of these for size:

"You know how it is. After the first sweaty months, you keep meaning to make love but it clashes with Newsnight."

"We were living together and then I found out he was screwing my daughter." "Big Woody Allen fan, was he?"

And here's one that is perfectly clean and clever. "Radioactive isotopes do better than you — at least they've got half a life."

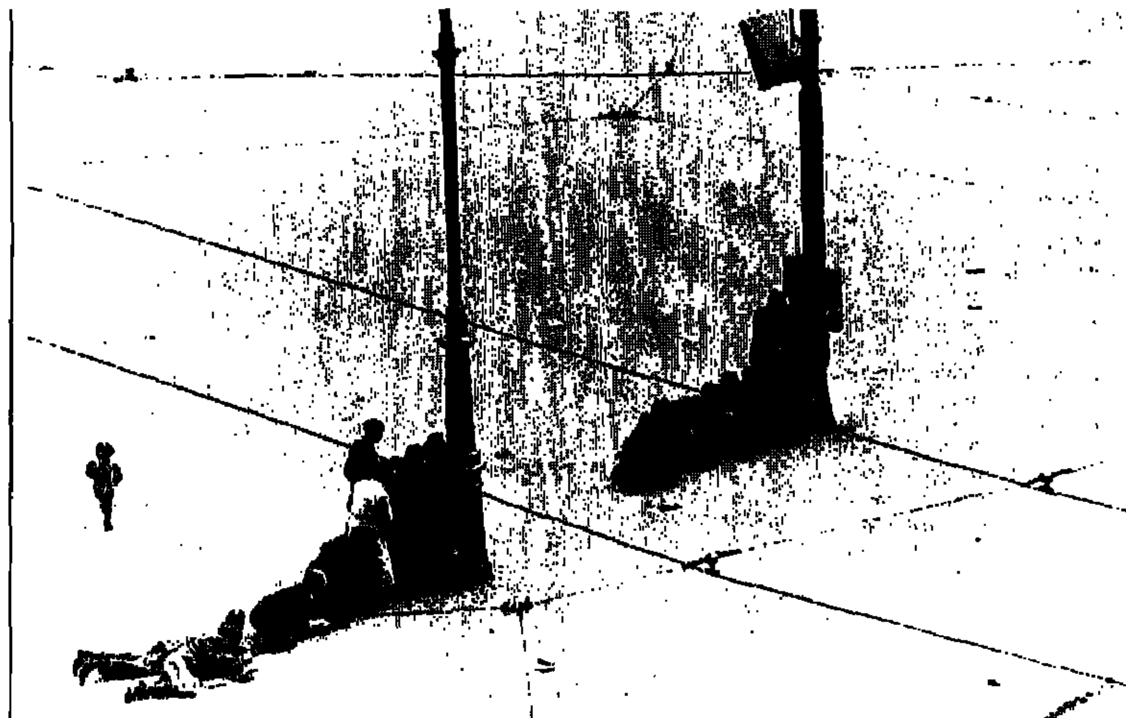
***Ice Warriors* (ITV) is Gladiators on ice, a very jolly romp in which Nigel from Nottingham competes against Thorgon the Beast ("a creature of the wilderness"). Your heart goes out to Nigel as Thorgon whacks him in the solar plexus with a telegraph pole.**

Sharak the Avenger ("Cross him at your peril!") and Rax the Destroyer ("whose name is spoken only in awe") look rather sweet when they take their helmets off. The moral is, always ask an alien to remove his hat.

***Three Monkeys* (BBC2) was High Noon with a new ending. White-faced capuchin monkeys are more like people than is altogether comfortable. The male drove off half a dozen bandits but he was badly hurt doing it. His women and children clustered round, comforting and concerned. Then the bandits came back.**

Weak and wounded, he went to meet them alone. We all know the plot: one monkey with strong pacifist convictions and a cocked rifle should stand by him. Alas, not. Everyone took to the treetops. The bandits closed in . . .

As Ring Lardner said, "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. But that's the way to bet."



Death in the afternoon

On May 7, 1945 Nazi troops opened fire on civilians in Amsterdam's main square. But for once the atrocity could not be hidden. **Jonathan Jones** meets the resistance men who photographed it all

THE myth of the photojournalist is of a solitary, heroic figure. Whether it's Weegee cruising the New York night or Don McCullin looking warily out of a Vietnam foxhole, the photographer is alone at the centre of the action. The classic news photograph is a single image that encapsulates a larger drama — a girl running naked from a napalm attack, a student standing in front of a tank.

None of the pictures in De Dam 7 Mei 1945 an exhibition at London's Photographers' Gallery, work in that iconic way. Nor do any of them have the signature style of a famous photojournalist. They work best when seen together. They seem to record the perceptions of a collective rather than an individual eye.

On May 7, 1945 everyone in Amsterdam knew that Allied troops were about to enter the city. Liberation seemed a formality. An immense crowd built up in the Dam, the city's most important public space, to celebrate in front of the town hall. Something — no one knows exactly what — provoked the jumpy German troops in one of the buildings on the square to strafe the crowd with machine-gun fire, leaving 22 dead and many more injured. Sixteen photographers recorded the resulting panic and chaos in a sequence of images taken from multiple viewpoints.

As you look through the pictures in the narrative order in which they have been placed, the square at first looks like a breathing, living organism. The crowd ebbs and flows, parts and closes around friendly Resistance cars or hostile German trucks. Then the shooting starts. With a sudden exhalation, the square empties. The mass of people dissipates — a moment caught best by W F Leijns, an amateur photographer shooting from the roof of an office block. His picture shows a terrifying void where the crowd should be. Other photographs dwell on a pathetic litter of bicycles and dead bodies scattered in the emptiness. The impossibility of distinguishing individual styles makes it seem we're looking at the fractured memories of the city itself.

This is not an accident. The massacre in the Dam happened without warning. But many of the photographers were primed to react, positioned with Leica and Rolleiflex at the ready, because they had been sent there by a secret organisation called De Ondergedoken Camera (the Underground Camera). This unique enterprise used the methods later employed by the Magnum photographic agency, on behalf of the Dutch Resistance.

To find out more, I visited the small Dutch seaside town of Zandvoort where its founder, Tony van Renterghem, has retired after living for years in Malibu, California.

I WAS waiting to hear stories of wartime heroism, but Van Renterghem first wanted to show me some soft porn. "I did some of the first underwater pictures ever taken with nudes," he said as we sat in a seaside cottage looking at a picture of a model peeping out from behind a coral reef. Then he pulled out a nude pin-up of his wife, Suzanne, "the best-selling poster in the States two years running".

He wanted me to see these pictures not out of pride — though he is proud of them — but to illustrate his definition of photography. "It's real life. One day it's a dead body, one day it's a pretty girl, one day it's a view, a landscape, one day it's a calamity."

Van Renterghem is handsome even at 78, but when he went to the United States as a young Resistance hero he had real glamour. His first date with a Hollywood starlet was written up by Louella Parsons. His Hollywood career didn't blossom and he spent years living in a shack on Malibu beach.

When the war started, he was a cavalry officer and "spoilt little rich boy". By 1944 he was chief of staff to the commander of the Resistance in the main district of Amsterdam, and had been sentenced to death.

During his endless moves from attic to attic, Van Renterghem found himself hiding in the same house as a young German-Jewish photographer called Fritz Kahlenberg. "We discussed the fact that it was fine to take espionage pictures but what Holland really needed was Life magazine-type coverage to show what was going on." They immediately started to organise the Underground Camera.

"The deal would be that Kahlenberg would handle the photographers and I would handle the Resistance. I would always see where there would be interesting things to photograph, so we'd have our photographers on the spot when some of these things occurred. The photographers were totally independent. They just got a call — 'Hey, there's something interesting happening; do you want to come along?' "

Photography was central to the war in Holland. In this heavily urbanised country, the Germans were able to impose a rigorous system of rationing and identity cards. To maintain a Resistance and conceal Jewish refugees took immense effort, and photography's role was ambiguous. The photographs on identity cards could kill you. The Resistance responded with fake identity cards for which they took their own photographs.



Give me shelter . . . above, Dutch civilians take refuge behind lamp posts as the German machine-guns open up. Left, after the shooting stops
PHOTOGRAPHS: WIEL VAN DER RANDEN, CAS OORTHUYS

The Underground Camera drew on this sense of photography as complex visual subterfuge. Its members had a healthy respect for Nazi propaganda. "The Germans had a magnificent magazine called Signal, with beautiful colour photography," Van Renterghem remembers. "They showed all the fuck-ups of the British and the Americans. They showed pictures of the Russians and Americans they'd captured and would retouch them to make them look like real creeps. We thought, if they do that, it's very important that we show counter-photography."

Counter-photography meant obtaining German photographs and juxtaposing them with images shot by the Underground Camera, so that blue-eyed Dutch Nazis at a training camp stared at the corpses of Resistance fighters.

The Nazis were always giving themselves away. Photo labs in Amsterdam slipped second sets of prints to the Underground Camera whenever a German photographer brought in something indiscreet. "The Germans sometimes wanted to record something — the officers to show they were in charge — and then in the background you saw Jews being deported on streetcars."

As the war reached its climax and the Allies became bogged down in southern Holland, Amsterdam started to slip into mass starvation. "We took all kinds of photographs showing people dying of hunger," says Van Renterghem. "And then the dead were put in the Westerkerk because the ground was frozen stiff and the only coffins they had were made of cardboard. They didn't even have the manpower to dig the graves."

AMSTERDAM was reverting to medieval squalor, but the Underground Camera photographs helped to save people's lives. "We photographed the babies from the top hospital in Amsterdam who were dying of hunger. There were no coffins: they were just put in paper bags in the church. The pictures were sent to London. While the war was still on there was a food drop into Holland."

On May 7, 1945 the war was supposedly over. The Underground Camera photographers went to the Dam to record the celebrations. I met one of them in the canal house where he has an art gallery and studio. "I was very late in the Underground Camera," Frits Lemaire said modestly. It turned out that he wanted to apologise for not taking the picture that would have killed him.

"We were to photograph the Liberation. I was in the centre of the square. I saw the Germans with their machine-guns. The crowd disappeared in seconds." Lemaire was standing on a platform directly below the soldiers. If he'd stayed there he'd have died, but he might have got a better picture. "I was afraid. I missed the picture of my life."

The Underground Camera sent photographers to the Dam that day to capture the precise moment of transition from war to peace. Instead they photographed something with no clear resolution. Their pictures of the Dam shooting build up to a peak of excitement, then collapse into melancholy. After the panic, a priest ministers to the dying and nurses help the injured. But the square doesn't fill up again. The war has not yet ended.

De Dam 7 Mei 1945 is at the Photographers' Gallery, London, until February 28

Transcending the gay play ghetto

THEATRE
Michael Billington

IT'S doubles all round at London's Cottesloe. In Tom Stoppard's The Invention of Love, the dead A E Housman communed with his younger self. Now in Kevin Elyot's wistful, elegiac The Day I Stood Still, another shyly repressed gay hero encounters himself when young and recalls his unfulfilled passion for a straight student chum.

The emotional pattern of Elyot's play is weirdly similar to Stoppard's. But all resemblances end there. For Elyot's intricate play is, in many ways, a continuation of ideas explored in his 1994 hit, My Night With Reg.

Once again we have a sexually nervous hero living off past memories and an ever-present sense of death and decay; and even if there is not quite as much bounce and wit as in the earlier work, Elyot once more shows himself capable of transcending the ghettoising definition of the gay play.

What is particularly striking is the way Elyot plays so assuredly with time. Set in a north London mansion block, his play moves confidently from present to future to past. It starts with Horace, a solitary museum worker and part-time novelist, being unexpectedly visited by Judy, an old friend from student days in the sixties. Horace's awkwardness stems partly from the fact that he was very much in love with Judy's ex-partner, Jerry; even more from the fact that he is expecting the arrival of a rented stud.

It would be cruel to reveal Elyot's manipulation of the plot. But through the experience of the lonely, hesitant, life-fearing Horace, he touches poignantly on a universal theme: the way we cling, in desperation, to some golden moment in the past as a protection against the uncertain present.

Horace's life has clearly been defined by his unfulfilled love for the young Jerry; and Elyot cunningly suggests this is a source both of constant pain and strange contentment.

Not everything in the play works. The very artfulness of the plot, in which every loose end is tied up, gives an over-resolved feeling. It remains, however, an intelligent play about a common experience: the Proustian notion that the true paradise is the one that we have lost. Ian Rickson's production is sensitive to the play's changes of tense.

Adrian Scarborough captures precisely Horace's mixture of romantic longing and fear of commitment. Callum Dixon is also suitably tentative as his younger self, and there is good support from Oliver Milburn, as the youthfully idealised Jerry, and from Daisy Beaumont as the hippyish student Judy.

Caution: men at work

CINEMA
Richard Williams

MEN! Can't trust 'em. Just look at these two, Chad and Howard. Couple of business types — late 20s, dark suits, white shirts, neckties loosened as they sit in a club-class departure lounge. Chad's a jock. Howard's a nerd. Their conversation runs on metaphors drawn from sport and bodily functions. These are the warriors of corporate America, seething with the insecurity that their employers convert into competitive workplace performance. "Life is for the taking, is it not?" Chad remarks, his dark eyes glittering. Howard nods, glumly.

What these two men do to a third party, in the name of taking their revenge on womankind, is the subject of In The Company Of Men. Written and directed by Neil LaBute, it is being hyped as an "issue" movie in the tradition of Fatal Attraction and Indecent Proposal. In other words, it presents a situation that appears to encapsulate some of the fears lurking around the sexual politics of our time. For once, here is a film that may actually fulfil such a promise.

Recently dumped by their girlfriends, Chad and Howard are venting their anger en route to a six-week engagement in a strange city. And Chad has a plan. Let's make somebody pay, he suggests. Let's pick a vulnerable woman, maybe one who's given up hope of real romance, and we'll both make a big play for her, independently. When she's dizzy with shock and euphoria, we'll dump her, just like that. "Let's do it," Chad decides, as they stagger back to their hotel rooms after a long night in the bar. "Let's hurt somebody."

The next day Chad spots their victim, a copy typist called Christine. Deaf since childhood, she lip-reads but can speak only with difficulty. Chad gets her into bed, while Howard polishes up his ex-girlfriend's engagement ring, preparing it for re-use. And as their approaches diverge, their own conflicting responses come under scrutiny.

All the publicity is designed to get us speculating on whether or not men really do these things in the workplace — a few men all the time, quite a lot of men some of the time, or all men occasionally. But that is not the issue here. LaBute's job is to produce individuals, not archetypes; to construct a story, not a sermon. If he has done his job, the wider resonance will be obvious.

This is his first film, and it doesn't look or sound like anybody else's.



Bad company . . . Aaron Eckhart flatters to deceive Stacy Edwards

The exposition is laid out as we follow Chad and Howard on their initial journey: airport, plane, shuttle bus, restaurant, hotel. While they conspire, we seem to be spying. We are the people eavesdropping from across the aisle, or in the next booth, or standing behind them in the check-in queue. Their conversations are subdued and elliptical, emerging from the hum of air-conditioning or the buzz of traffic. Our view is oblique, sometimes obstructed.

'Women! Inside, they're all the same . . . meat and gristle and hatred. Just simmering'

LaBute's background is in writing for the theatre, and to read his script after watching the film is to realise what a great ear he has, and to see how satisfying it must be to deliver his lean, spare lines, fashioned from pure vernacular patterns and swift, rakish rhythms. This is David Mamet with the flourishes pared away, and LaBute's readiness to shoot in long takes from a single viewpoint gives his dialogue the oxygen it deserves.

To call it a black comedy, as some have, is to make it sound misleadingly jolly. There's an abundance of wit, but it's all bitter. This is a black satire, maybe, and in the character of Chad it is at its darkest. If Oscars were given simply for merit, Aaron Eckhart would be in with a big shout this year. Sardonic, predatory, he gets some chillingly brilliant lines: "Women! Nice ones, the most frigid ones of the race, doesn't matter in the end . . . inside, they're all the same. Meat, and gristle, and hatred. Just simmering." Only when LaBute makes Chad humiliate a black office junior by ordering him to lower his underpants and show the size of his balls does he risk pushing the character's sadism too far, suggesting an unnecessary extra layer of motivation.

Matt Molloy's floppy blond hair and pursed mouth bring a proper sense of weakness to the role of Howard, his nature opening up as we overhear an angrily defensive phone call to his mother — the film's best single piece of writing. But while Stacy Edwards conveys the sense of simple goodness that Christine demands, she might also be thought too luminously beautiful to be entirely convincing as the victim of these two reptiles.

Still, this is a serious, brainy, and highly entertaining film — the best kind of popular cinema. Remember the surprise and pleasure of encountering sex, lies and videotape? That kind of thing.

Barry glitter

Could it be magic? When Mr Manilow croons, grannies storm the stage. **Caroline Sullivan** knows just how they feel

PRE-MILLENNIAL tension has generated all sorts of oddness, but oddest of all might be what is currently occurring in the previously placid ranks of Barry Manilow fanciers. In Birmingham, they were waving banners that would make a Boyzone fan blush ("Manilow fans do it with candles"); in Bournemouth, they rioted, so unnerving Barry that he refused to encore. Rioted! These are not West Ham fans — these are ladies whose age and dimensions make the notion of a stage invasion gigglingly implausible. But riot they did, trampling each other to get to their 50-year-old love thang, he of robust nose and pungent Brooklyn accent.

Manilow is used to the attentions of his British fans, who fly *en masse* to his American concerts and sign letters to each other "With Manilove". But even he must be wondering what has got into them. After all, he's been doing more or less the same thing for 23 years. It isn't as if he's suddenly become hip *à la* Burt Bacharach, whose cachet soared after Noel Gallagher confessed to being a fan.

Anyway, the crooner approached Wembley with trepidation, probably expecting an attack on his snug black trousers. "We're gonna get trembly at Wembley tonight," he said with a chuckle. But did they oblige? They did not. The half-full house sat docilely, clutching programmes and green neon gig-necklaces, too sodden from the bubble-bath of his voice to rampage.

Their passiveness didn't denote indifference, though. Every so often Baz would make a slightly risqué comment ("I am interactive, I am hands-on. Yeah, I wish") and oestrogen would surge through their veins, finding release in a collective low moan. Manilow handled their Manilove like the veteran he is, parrying suggestive japes.

Barry to fan: "So, what do you do, Linda?"

Linda: "What do you want me to do?"

Barry (clutching bow tie in mock shock and flexing surprisingly firm tush): "Phwoaargh!"

Actually, he didn't say "Phwoaargh!" He said the Brooklyn Jewish equivalent, which is more like "Me? You dig a nebbish like *me*? But look at me!"

That's half the secret of his success — he does the Jewish New Yorker schtick as instinctively as Woody Allen. And the rest? There was plenty of time to dwell on that during the two-hour-plus show, and I eventually decided that it is because he's one of the few remaining all-rounders. He sings a Broadway medley with the same ease as a blubsome ballad or the Latin-lite "Copacabana", and makes all of 'em rip-roaring fun. His problem isn't uncoolness — it's that he was born 25 years too late.

However, there were signs that he's attempting to address this. For a start, he's getting to grips with technology. There was a screen, upon which flashed his 29 album covers, and selected fans were allowed to choose songs by pointing a clicker and stopping an album. "Bad hair," he remarked of the cover of his 1972 debut. "American Gigolo," was his sorrowful judgment of the Levi's-wearing would-be hunk lounging on the front of the 1980 opus Barry.

And not only is Baz IT-friendly, he also knows about dance music (though he probably doesn't approve). At the end of the epic ballad "Could It Be Magic?", he tacked on an unexpected drum 'n' bass postscript.

But all that was gravy. The meat of the show was the heartfelt renditions of everything from the opening "Daybreak" to "I Write the Songs" (which he didn't write). He managed to wedge in most of his 20-odd hits: "Mandy", "New York City Rhythm", etc, etc. The ladies Maniloved it, of course, especially Copacabana, whose brassy keyboard fills induced them to twitch their rumps like Lola in the song.

Predictably, the biggest moment was "Can't Smile Without You", which has become Manilegend. It's the one where he chooses a fan to sing onstage with him. Banners sprouted, imploring "Choose Me" and "I'm Free". He picked Linda, who shakily announced she'd seen him 91 times. That explained why she knew every word of the tune, and Barry dropped his voice to allow hers to prevail. She returned to her seat a changed woman.



'You dig a nebbish like *me*?' Manilow piles on the charm

Faust at the North Pole

Paul Theroux

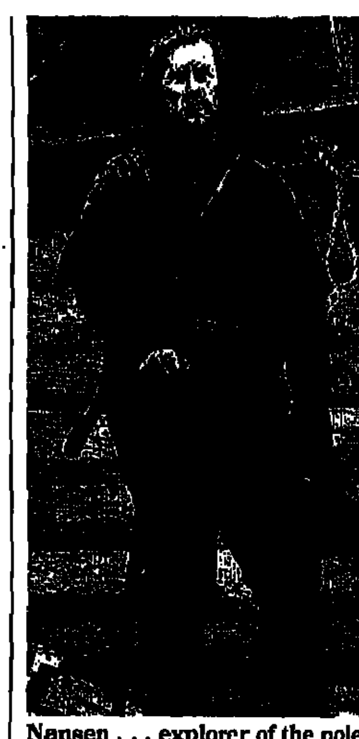
Nansen: The Explorer as Hero
by Roland Huntford
Duckworth 610pp £25

THAT Fridtjof Nansen (1861-1930) was in fact bi-polar — that is to say, manic-depressive — is one of many curiosities in this wonderful biography of the greatest polar explorer by the best biographer of polar explorers. Roland Huntford has also written Scott and Amundsen and Shackleton. His Nansen has been long-awaited. It is a triumph. And it disproves the observation of Apsley Cherry-Garrard, in The Worst Journey In The World, that "polar exploration is at once the cleanest and most isolated way of having a bad time that has been devised".

Nansen dismissed his heroic first crossing of Greenland as "a ski tour". As Huntford points out, he "demythologised polar exploration". It hardly matters that he never actually managed to stand on either pole: without Nansen's own ingenious and crush-proof ship Fram, and the pioneering use of skis and dogs, Amundsen would not have made it to the South Pole; and Nansen was Amundsen's inspiration in his airship crossing of the North Pole.

Nansen began as a pioneer neurologist, a scientist and researcher, and this biography shows that the polar regions were not the only unknown places in the world in Nansen's time. The human body also had its mysterious regions. The erroneous so-called "nerve-net" theory of the central nervous system had not yet been disproved. Nansen's descriptions of the mechanisms of the nerves were revolutionary, and correct. "He was one of the great simplifiers," Huntford writes. But Nansen went further as an imaginative scientist, prophesying that the tangle of nerve fibres "is the true seat of the psyche".

His own psyche was complex and



Nansen . . . explorer of the poles and of women's hearts

disturbed. His father was a stern, remote and difficult man, and Nansen grew up having to prove himself. In the event Nansen was also a stern and remote father, which is perhaps not surprising. But bringing his micro-managing and fuss-budgetry to exploration changed the whole business entirely and made it much more successful.

Nansen, a passionate skier, saw this as the way to conquer the poles. He was unorthodox in expedition planning: he opted for lightness and speed. He invented a new sort of cook-stove, a small sleeping bag, warmer clothes; he even devised a different cuisine. He invented a small landing craft, and came up with a brilliant solution to polar winters in designing the Fram. As an oceanographer, he accurately predicted how a team might float north on current-borne ice.

Like many priapic men he was essentially solitary, a fantasist, a loner, a non-sharer — though he slept with many women, from the Valkyries in his native land to the Duchess of Sutherland and Kathleen Scott. He was romancing Mrs Robert Falcon Scott even as her husband was pegging out and breathing his last on his homeward journey, writing a pathetic note to the faithless woman. Nansen was a fussy and exasperating lover, marriage and love affairs could throw him — later in life he begged Mrs Scott in vain to marry him — but he was dauntless in exploration.

One of his inspired moves was to take two Lapps on the Greenland trip. Here is Huntford's description of the diminutive pair entering a big sealskin Eskimo tent, lit by blubber lamps, for the first time: "Balto and Ravna were transfixed by what seemed a gruesome caricature of their own, customary Lapp life in the *kata*, or skin tent, at home. They were prepared — just — to tolerate the fact that the Eskimos went about naked indoors. They even swallowed their revulsion when it emerged that their hosts washed in urine — chemically a sound idea, incidentally, because urine dissolves fat; and soap, here, was still unknown. But when a nursing mother entered the tent, completely disrobed, and proceeded to suckle her child on all fours, like an animal, that was too much even for the Lapps, and they too hurried into the open air."

The Age of Discovery ended with the attainment of the South Pole. The trouble with exploration firsts is that they are nearly always generated by the meanest and narrowest demands of nationalism. Every country needs heroes. The fragile and feminine Scott that Huntford described in a previous biography fitted the bill as a battler against the odds, and Scott's failure is much more clearly remembered as an icon of struggle than Amundsen's success. Norway, emerging from Sweden's shadow in the last decades of the 19th century, needed heroes. Nansen was willing and he was well-equipped. He was physically strong, a true athlete, an intellectual, a scientist; he was handsome and humane, he was well read — loved Goethe, spoke English well. He was something of an Anglophile.

That he was a legend in his own time made him more attractive to the ladies and got him invited to Sandringham where he hobnobbed with King Edward VII (and noted with hot eyes that Mrs Keppel was in residence, as well as Queen Alexandra); he played bridge with the Queen of Spain and his own Queen Maud and the Duke of Alva; and he went further — paddled palms and pinched fingers with Queen Maud. "Now don't you go and fall in love with Queen Maud!" Nansen's first wife wrote from Norway.

SECONDED to serve as a diplomat — he dealt directly with Lenin, who instructed his cronies, "Be extremely polite to Nansen, extremely insolent to Wilson, Lloyd George and Clemenceau" — Nansen was never less than a hero. But as he grew more famous he became ever more distracted and sad.

Because of Nansen's many accomplishments, Huntford sees him as approaching the "Renaissance ideal of the universal man". I don't think that is pushing it at all, because it is clear that Nansen succeeded — as so many people do — precisely because of the weaknesses in his character, not just his impatience and his questionable leadership qualities, but also his fear, for fear is a necessity that prevents the best explorers from being foolhardy. Nansen saw himself as Faustian, and Huntford adumbrates his contradictions with admirable force, making this a hugely satisfying biography of a "driven and tormented man who, in spite of his triumphs, felt strangely unfulfilled".

If you would like to order a copy of Nansen at the special price of £20, contact the Guardian Culture Shop

Bomb voyage among the ten-pound poms

Tobias Jones

Acts of Mutiny
by Derek Beaven
Fourth Estate 280pp £14.99

ACTS OF MUTINY, a description of a ship's voyage from Britain to Australia in the fifties, plays with naval metaphors throughout: the knots in the tongue ("left over right, tuck under") and narrative navigation, discipline and "holding the line". Like the best seagoing yarns, from those of the Argonaut and the Ancient Mariner to Golding's Rites Of Passage, Derek Beaven's vessel, the Armorica, becomes a closed microcosm of society, as it passes from the Bay of Biscay, to the Mediterranean, Suez, Colombo. Using the Menzies-MacMillan pact, whereby English emigrants maintained a "white Australia" in return for nuclear test-sites in the bush, as his historical backdrop, Beaven's second novel is a dark comedy of manners and military sophistry.

His deliberately unreliable narrator is a child, Ralph, whose "glittering, dangerous" memory and inventive imagination is used to recall the long voyage: he is full of fantasies of stowaways, commies, and nuclear fallout, and is seen as an annoyance by other passengers. Of his gibberish — later seen as highly prescient — one character says: "Some of it sounded like a rehearsed speech, as if he had manipulated the conversation round to his subject."

On board is his mother, Erica, who has run away from his father with the charming American, Mr Chaunteyman; there's also Robert Kettle, a scientist with the nuclear industry. He is romancing Penny Kendrick, who is sailing out to join her husband in Adelaide. Also here are the oversexed colonials, Cheryl and Lucas, the very proper Cootes couple, and a steerage deck, full of poor emigrants paying £10 to start a new life in Australia.

The symphony of voices is beautifully harmonic, and although there's a knowing, gently satirical edge to the portrayals, they ring very true. Of Ralph's father, a naval man who had been at war, Beaven writes: "He shrugged off any approach of emotion with grim clowning. He used that particular baby-talk larded with back-slang, which tends to lurk in the Navy."

The novel becomes politicised when Ralph finds out about the nuclear cargo, and this "Leviathan" haunts and radiates through the dark ending. "There's strontium-90 in the milk. I know what that is. My dad told me. It's fallout." Ralph's mind races with the danger of what is stowed on board. Through his hints and interjections, the passengers demand the truth from the heavy-handed military, still talking about "strategy". Over the Armorica hovers this mystery, like the "steely-eyed albatross, riding empty air above the mainmast head".

With Penny's emancipation, Robert's impassioned plea for military honesty, and the receding, if imaginary post-war innocence, the voyage represents a mutiny against the old order of things.

Beaven lyrically evokes the ports and passages, the equatorial crossing: "the westward passage", by the southern tip of the Americas, was the Horn. That is "a monster whose teeth are giant waves, and whose refrigerated breath loads spars, masts and rigging top heavy with ice, bursts sails, breaks hearts". His dialogue is so right somehow, and entirely surprising in the way characters mouth the narration on Ralph's behalf. The story seeps out slowly through them and through Ralph's confused interruptions, questions, and memory.

"Pom", as the other children call him, becomes the paranoid narrator whose conspiracy theories come true: there is no official record of the Armorica, "not with the shipping company, nor with Lloyd's, nor with the Maritime Museum at Greenwich". The reader is never certain whether this is cover-up or false memory. Ralph implies a more sinister union with his father than a naval fraternity; but the abuse is only implied by metaphor and euphemism, and by the one line from the Bible that Ralph can remember: "I am that leviathan whom thou hast made to take his pastime therein." The violence Penny experiences at the hands of her husband isn't described, only remembered, so the narrative appears unstable, brilliantly evasive. "Memory can play us false," Beaven writes.

This is a difficult, clever and convoluted novel. A running commentary on postcolonialism, it teases ideas out of the characters. The anti-war element is as powerful as Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse 5, without even seeming earnest. The metaphors are over-egged (television reception "as unstable as the grasshoppers on Bostall Heath"), but it is an absorbing romance throughout. It would make a superbly exotic, political film. When, inevitably, disaster strikes, the scenes are so orchestrated that the grand design, the sinister conspiracy, is complete, even if it is only in Ralph's imagination, and the ship and its crew hit the rocks of the nuclear age.

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

Art, Class and Cleavage, by Ben Watson (Quartet, £14)

THERE is a little advertisement, in the old-fashioned sense, at the beginning of this book: "My publishers tell me that they fear the book's 'un-orthodox' political assumptions will render its theses incomprehensible." And to be sure individual sentences make sense and are written with passion, intelligence and playfulness; but what it's about, in that rather boring, overall sense, would be hard to pin down. It's a mixture of Marxism, [illegible] poetry, punk rock, Finnegans Wake, Horace and Frank Zappa.

All this could be tiresome in the extreme, but it somehow isn't; and I suspect that its madness is a matter not so much of self-advertisement as anti-self-advertisement: he doesn't want to become a cult. But what he says about Sarah Kent, the so-called art critic, makes me want to send him a huge bunch of flowers.

The Last Pink Bits, by Harry Ritchie (Sceptre, £6.99)

HARRY RITCHIE had a terrific idea: to go round the last bits of the British Empire — Gibraltar, the Falklands, the Turks and Caicos Islands — and write a Bill Bryson-style book about the scrapes he gets into.

The Bryson comparison springs easily to mind. Ritchie doesn't make you hurt with laughter as much as Bryson, but you get at least one good chuckle per page. And, what's perhaps more important, he likes people, and he never sneers at them. This is a sly portrait of Great Britain seen through its last possessions. And what a sorry picture it is once you are outside Bermuda (and the extraordinary-sounding Tristan da Cunha). There is a superb tirade at the end of the book, brought about by his realisation that the Overseas Development Agency has more or less incarcerated the entire population of St Helena as effectively as it once did Napoleon.

As If, by Blake Morrison (Granta, £7.99)

THROUGHOUT the first half of this book about the Bulger case, Morrison goes in for lots of little literary allusions — the nervous tic of the deeply literary man. And well might he be given to such tics, for the story he tells is uniquely disturbing.

This is a book that may well give you nightmares, especially if you have a child yourself: he is chillingly accurate and honest about the fears parents have regarding their children, and, indeed, the desires. Part reportage, part meditation on childhood (and therefore, also, on adulthood), and on responsibility, it is at times painful, if not downright harrowing: but you cannot imagine a better treatment of the subject.

Femme de siècle

Elaine Showalter

The New Feminism
by Natasha Walter
Little, Brown 278pp £17.50

TWO cheers for Natasha Walter. The newest aspect of The New Feminism is its defence of Margaret Thatcher. Walter's gutsiness in praising Thatcher as "the great unsung heroine of British feminism", a woman who "normalised female success", is alone worth the price of the book. It is about time that a young British feminist stood up for Thatcher, and Walter's defiant comments about women embracing power and realising "how many good things can be built with dirty hands, covered with the grit of determination and the oil of money" should be written in the skies above Oxbridge and London.

For I agree with her argument that "the women's movement was weakened by its excessive attachment to a politically correct idealism"; and it is a pleasure to see such a young British woman speak out for a new generation and century.

In many ways, Walter's call to arms uncannily echoes the feminism of the last *fin de siècle*, with its excitement about new beginnings and its utopian zeal. She celebrates "a new dawn" shining into women's faces. She calls for an undoing of the link between women's personal and political lives. She defends fashion, beauty, self-decoration and the delight of dressing up; she supports a variety of sexual personae as role models, from supermodels to the sexually active woman to "glitzy, fun-loving lesbians"; she stresses the achievements of British feminism, from the Spice Girls to Clare Short, and urges women in Britain to "reclaim the history of feminism" as a "mainstream, majority movement". She looks across class, speaking to the cleaners and students, actresses and immigrants, MPs and homeworkers. She welcomes men in feminism.

Finally, she outlines a five-part agenda for the new feminism: a new balance between work and home; a national childcare network; shared domestic responsibility between men and women; moving women out of poverty; and protection and support for women facing violence.

So why two cheers instead of three? First, despite her advocacy of personal freedom, Walter has not shaken off some old-feminist moralism; she just applies it to Americans. The States are sexist because more women have cosmetic surgery. Her assertion that "British men are constructing a new culture around the loss of power" needs more evidence than a few random references.

Second, Walter has not come to terms with the tough political strategies, sacrifices, risks and compromises required to put her agenda into action. As she notes, the women's movement in 1990s Britain has no "unified culture" but rather hundreds of small single-issue organisations. Getting them to work together is the political problem.

Walter admits that while she began the book "to record the growing power and confidence" of British women, she kept "finding myself up against other stories". But at her spirited best, she is a symbol of this power and confidence, and a hopeful sign of new feminist stories in a more egalitarian future.

Hersh's assault has enraged lots of Americans who still cherish memories of JFK

My kingdom for a whore

Jacob Weisberg

The Dark Side of Camelot
by Seymour Hersh
HarperCollins 498pp £8.99

IN THE sixties, the name of Kennedy was synonymous with tragedy. More recently it has become a byword for farce. To bring the story up to date for the past year: after the family souvenirs were knocked down at Sotheby's, Michael Kennedy, one of Robert F Kennedy's 11 children, was investigated for seducing a teenage babysitter. Michael's older brother, Joe, a Boston congressman who once left a girl paralysed in a car wreck, had to abandon running for governor of Massachusetts when his ex-wife published a book excoriating him for seeking an annulment of their marriage. Then, just after Christmas, Michael Kennedy died by crashing into a tree while playing ski-football in Colorado.

John F Kennedy, Jr has become the family parodist. One recent cover of his magazine George featured the actress Drew Barrymore done up as his father's former mistress, Marilyn Monroe, on the occasion she sang "Happy Birthday, Mr President".

To call the family's recent travails a soap opera attributes to them too much dignity and coherence. The demise of the Kennedy dynasty has become public sport. Until recently, the common view has been that the flawed statesmen John and Robert left behind a younger brother, Ted, and a brood of children who inherited all of the flaws but not all of the statesmanship.

Driven by the family ethos of public virtue combined with private vice, less capable members are doomed, tragic figures. A less sympathetic, but increasingly popular view is represented by the current volume. According to Seymour Hersh, the Kennedy family has lost only the art of getting away with it. They've always been a bunch of degenerates.

Hersh's assault has enraged lots of Americans who still cherish the memories of JFK and RFK, most especially those whom one must hesitate, in light of current knowledge about JFK's connections to organised crime, to call the Kennedy mafia. Former brains-trusters and acolytes such as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr and Theodore Sorensen have lumped Hersh together with Kitty Kelley and Oliver Stone, taking the line that the book is a farrago of fantastic gossip and paranoid speculation.

Sorensen, whom Hersh portrays as a Kennedy toady, has been especially nasty in denouncing the book as "a pathetic collection of wild stories". When The Dark Side Of Camelot was published in America in November, the media as a whole tried to have it both ways, retailing all of the book's most prurient nuggets while appearing to hold its nose.

HERSH does hyperventilate a bit when he gets into the tastier details of JFK's sexual excesses, which he offers on the authority of four former members of the secret service. But on balance he manages to present his case in a roughly fair-minded way, including enough contrary evidence for readers to make up their own minds. Hersh thinks Kennedy married a party-girl named Durie Malcolm in Palm Beach in 1947 and that the marriage lasted for about 15 minutes. His chief witness is one Charles Spalding, a close friend of JFK's. But Hersh freely acknowledges that Spalding, aged 79, suffers from memory impairment, and that he couldn't find others to confirm the story.

The same goes for Hersh's fascinating scoop about a break-in at Judith Exner's Los Angeles apartment in 1962. Exner — who was at various times the lover of Frank Sinatra, JFK, and the Chicago-based mobster Sam Giancana — was under surveillance by the FBI because of her ties with the mob. According to FBI files obtained by Hersh, agents monitoring Exner's home saw two men break in from the fire escape. Tracing the licence plates, they determined that the burglars were the two sons of a former FBI special agent who was head of security for General Dynamics Corporation, a major aerospace contractor.

Hersh thinks the company blackmailed the President into giving it a huge Pentagon contract. But he acknowledges that he lacks definitive proof. Even if true, American critics of Hersh have suggested, such information is not historically "relevant". But it is obviously relevant to any real understanding of JFK. In The Kennedy Imprisonment, Gary Wills did a much better job of connecting the family attitudes toward sexual conquest, the pursuit of power, and the conduct of foreign policy.

But Hersh supplies the raw material that substantiates that case as never before — and raw material it is. According to the secret service [illegible] aides joined JFK at the White House pool for daily skinny-dipping parties. Prostitutes were imported to his hotel rooms when he travelled, raising concerns for his safety.

The hazards were real. JFK contracted a crippling variety of venereal diseases. One of his mistresses was a suspected East German spy, who had to be spirited out of the country and handsomely paid off. JFK narrowly escaped from being drawn into the Profumo scandal.

There are, to be sure, some minor incongruities. Hersh relates one anecdote about a secret service agent having to prevent the First Lady from breaking up the fun at the White House swimming pool. Later in the book, Hersh describes Jackie Kennedy's strenuous efforts to avoid catching her husband in action. When it comes to the major foreign policy episodes — the Bay of Pigs, the Berlin crisis, the Cuban missile crisis and Vietnam — Hersh is out of his depth. There is more to these episodes than his monochromatic tales of a president willing to take any risk, tell any falsehood for the sake of political advantage.

The Dark Side Of Camelot represents a new stage in Kennedy historiography. Having passed from reverence to debunking to nostalgia, the popular view of the family has reached what may be the end-stage of degradation. Once seen as heroes, then as flawed tragedians, the Kennedys are now seen as predators with a self-destructive streak and lousy luck. This view will inevitably be revised again, but it can be expected to survive so long as the Kennedys continue providing evidence to support it.

Cricket First Test: West Indies v England

Pitch stops play after only an hour

Matthew Engel in Kingston, Jamaica

THE opening Test of England's tour of the West Indies ended in sensational and unparalleled circumstances 66 minutes after it began on Thursday last week when the umpires abandoned the match because the pitch was dangerous.

England were in familiar trouble at 17 for three, and the batsmen had already been hit six times in 10 overs by the West Indian fast bowlers.

However, there was unanimous agreement that this was not the old story of English incompetence and West Indian brilliance. Any incompetence belonged to officials from the Jamaica Cricket Board, who decided to re-lay the whole square at the Sabina Park ground just six months ago, with disastrous results.

The ball kept hitting cracks, and flying in unpredictable directions. Fortunately, physical damage was confined to a few bruises. However, the financial loss to the West Indian Cricket Board could run close to $1.6 million once they have refunded spectators and the broadcasters who paid for rights.

Under the Laws of Cricket, umpires have full jurisdiction over the fitness of the ground. After Alec Stewart had been hit for the third time, Mike Atherton came on to the field, and conferred with the opposing captain Brian Lara, who agreed the pitch was unfit for play.

As discussions continued, the boogie box played a Wailers song: "I'm A Cuttin' Razor, Don't Touch My Sides, I'm Dangerous." It was obvious that play could not continue, although it took an hour of consultations, involving International Cricket Council officials in London, before the game was officially called off.

That was an easy decision. The problem that remained unresolved was what happens next. Both teams are anxious to play a five-Test series, as are the West Indies board, who are already perilously close to bankruptcy.

It was confirmed later that an extra Test would be played in Port of Spain, Trinidad, starting this week, eight days before the scheduled second Test at the same venue.

There was no precedent for the abandonment of the match in 121 years of Test cricket, though a one-day international in India suffered the same fate last year, and there have been other rare cases in first-class cricket. Two years ago, an England tour game in Paarl, South Africa, finished a day early because the dead pitch had made the contest too boring.

The decision to abandon the match was accepted with remarkable calm by the hundreds of English spectators who had flown out, the thousands of Jamaicans on the ground and, above all, the players.

Alec Stewart pointed to his bruises and said simply: "If it had gone on much longer I'd have looked like a lady who's just appeared in a French court."


Fierce delivery . . . Atherton evades the first ball PHOTO: REBECCA NADEN

Shambles means two Tests in Trinidad

Mike Selvey in Kingston

THE ABANDONMENT of the first Test was not a decision taken lightly but with life and limb threatened — and the certain knowledge that the horrendous conditions would only get worse — it was inevitable. It had the full accord of everyone, players and officials alike.

For the West Indies Cricket Board and for the game in general it is a huge embarrassment at a time when the very existence of Caribbean cricket is under threat.

Both the West Indies board, not least because of the financial loss that the decision to abandon entails, and its English counterpart were keen that the series should be contested over five matches. No surface could be prepared at Sabina Park, however, and there is no other suitable venue in Jamaica. So the Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain will soon have a niche in the annals as the venue for a Test double-header.

The abandonment came after Courtney Walsh and Curtly Ambrose had bowled only 10 overs and one ball of high pace on a surface that had started the day looking like a crumpled tablecloth and, by the time the players departed with England battered, bruised and 17 for three, had begun to disintegrate as well.

Six times the England physiotherapist Wayne Morton sprinted on to the field to treat English batsmen as the ball repeatedly reared from a length and struck hands or body. It was a miracle, or rather a tribute to the resilience of modern equipment, that no serious damage was done, although later Graham Thorpe went for an X-ray on his right hand. As early as the third over the senior umpire, the Indian Srini Venkataraghavan, was in walkie-talkie contact with Barry Jarman, the International Cricket Council match referee, expressing his concern about the state of the pitch, and he had a number of subsequent conversations.

Eventually, at the instigation of Alec Stewart, the England captain Mike Atherton came on to discuss the matter with his counterpart Brian Lara. Jarman himself then appeared in the middle and after discussions with Venkat, the other umpire Steve Bucknor and both captains, the England batsmen, Stewart and Thorpe, walked off, followed by the West Indies team.

"The pitch was not up to standard," said Jarman. "In fact it was nowhere near standard. The umpires had been in constant touch with me. I told them that I thought it was horrific but it was down to them to decide."

Atherton for his part said that his prime consideration had been the well-being of the players. "I knew what was going through Venkat's mind," he said, "and felt that the safety of the players was paramount. Brian Lara was totally supportive."

There have been pitches as bad in the past, among them the strip for the tour pipe-opener in Montego Bay three weeks ago, but not in a Test and certainly not with some of the finest and fastest bowlers in history operating on it.

Nobody who saw the pitch beforehand — apart from a sadly deluded Jamaica Cricket Board — was under any illusion as to the type of surface this was going to be, not least because it is a sibling of that aforementioned dreadful pitch produced for England's game against Jamaica at Jarrett Park.

According to Jackie Hendricks, the Jamaica board's president, the old Sabina Park pitch had lost its pace and become too slow and low. So at the end of October, clay was brought in from the centre of the island and the whole square relaid.

Significantly both this pitch and the one at Jarrett Park were relaid under the supervision of the Sabina Park groundsman Charlie Joseph. He and the board's chief executive George Prescod, who had overall responsibility for the Test pitch, can be expected to be called to account.

There was turmoil even before play started. England's best-laid plans were thrown into confusion by an illness to Jack Russell, who was suffering from sickness and diarrhoea, brought on, perhaps, by a glance at the pitch. So the gauntlets once again were handed to Stewart, and Mark Butcher, whose last innings was at Canterbury on September 20, came in, much to his subsequent regret, to bat at three.

West Indies also made late changes, omitting first of all Franklyn Rose and Ian Bishop before replacing Mervyn Dillon with Bishop. Atherton won the toss and had no real option but to bat first.

It was the last semblance of normality to the day. When the stumps were pulled, Atherton, Butcher and Nasser Hussain were already back in the pavilion and Stewart had battled through for one of the great unbeaten nines of all time, so much so that he could scarcely contain his grin later.

It was not the day's first delivery nor even the first few balls that gave a full picture of the pitch's iniquity. But by the time Venkat had cranked up his intercom for the first time at the end of the third over, nobody could be in any doubt.

● Former England batsman Geoffrey Boycott has been axed from his role as a BBC commentator on the tour, pending the outcome of his appeal against a conviction in France for assaulting his ex-girlfriend.

Dangerous thoughts . . . Atherton puts his point of view to the match referee Barry Jarman, the two umpires and Lara PHOTO: CLIVE MASON

England A's Sri Lanka tour is cut short

AFTER three weeks of virtual inactivity followed by a week of high anxiety, England A finally reached the business part of the tour. Three successive Tests, quickly followed by three one-day internationals, form the truncated itinerary that will now see them leave Sri Lanka 10 days earlier than planned.

The revised schedule was agreed in the wake of last month's bomb explosion in Kandy, which has resulted in the second Test being switched to Matara in the south. When the England party arrived at their isolated base near Dambulla in the middle of the island, eager to assure families that all was well, they found that a lightning strike had reduced telecom facilities at the hotel to one cellular phone with exorbitant rates.

Well, as they say in these parts, "Prasniaka" (no worries). The first four-day Test began here last Friday. There are few home comforts on this ground although the backdrop of Elephant Rock is a stunning compensation - blinding, in fact, when the sun reaches its peak in the afternoon.

England have become so obsessed with safety during their stay in Sri Lanka that it should come as no surprise that it has permeated through to their cricket. They ground out 202 for four in 94 overs on the opening day — hardly the stuff of legend. But the logic of their approach was difficult to challenge.

A dry, perhaps unprepared pitch turned from the outset, encouraging the belief that if England could bat for the best part of two days their spinners might cause havoc later.

Nick Knight scored 85 in over five hours, an innings of self-denial which served his team well. Darren Maddy made a competent half-century before allowing a top-spinner to strike his off-stump.

Mark Ealham ended the day on an unbeaten 30 and then went on to add another 57 to his total, and his partnership with Ben Hollioake brought 119 runs in 32 overs. Hollioake was out for 67 and the England innings closed on 385. At stumps, Sri Lanka had made 105 for the loss of two wickets.

On the penultimate day, England were frustrated by an unbeaten ninth-wicket partnership between Mario Villaverayen and Dinuka Hettiarachchi who put on 45 runs and helped their side to a total of 341 for 8. The pair batted for 17 overs after the home side had lost four wickets for 42. With just one day left, the match was heading for a draw.

● In Adelaide, Mark Waugh hit an unbeaten century to earn Australia a draw in the final match of the three-Test series against South Africa, ensuring a 1-0 win for Australia. South Africa scored 517 and 193 for 6 declared. Australia reached 350 in their first innings (Taylor 169 no), then ground out the draw on the last day with 227 for 7 (M Waugh 115 no).

Tennis Australian Open

Korda serves up the punchline

Stephen Bierley in Melbourne

BACK in communist times there was a joke that Czechoslovakia had the largest cow in the world because its head was in Prague and it was milked in Moscow. And in tennis it had the tallest player in the world because Petr Korda's head was perpetually in the clouds while his feet were forever sinking in the quagmire.

Czechoslovakia has gone, and so have the jokes at the old Soviet Union's expense, but until last Sunday Korda's name was still prone to the sly dig. He had, after all, a long record of under-achievement.

So when he won the Australian Open here, beating a dispirited Marcelo Rios of Chile 6-2, 6-2, 6-2, there was immeasurable relief and joy from Korda, and a little guilt in those who suspected he might conjure up some unexpected way of losing.

But on this occasion the force was with him from the opening round. Korda, who turned 30 during the tournament, had announced this would probably be his final year in the game, and with that declaration he seemed to shed every cloying weight from his shoulders and self-doubt from his mind.

When the defending champion Pete Sampras fell to Slovakia's Karol Kucera, Korda's path to the final was clear. It appeared he could only beat himself, and after he defeated Kucera he spent "the worst 48 hours of my life". Korda added: "I was so nervous I could not eat on Saturday." But by the morning of the match he had resolved to be positive and aggressive. "It was as if all the pieces of the mosaic came together."

Whatever Korda might have been thinking his supporters were put through the wringer in his opening service game. Two glorious passes on both forehand and backhand were followed by a wild smash, a forehand error, and a double-fault. Rios had break-point, and the Korda contingent could barely watch.

If only they could have tapped into his mind they would not have fretted in the least. "I was not all nervous. OK, I missed a couple of shots but that was because of an unlucky bounce and me wanting to be positive."

What had been somewhat overlooked in the equation was that Rios, eight years younger than Korda, has also been prone to collapse in a heap at critical times.

"I felt tired and mis-hit too many balls," said Rios. I think your body relaxes a bit after a semi-final, and then you have to force it." As Rios forced, and missed, so his confidence dwindled. By the third set he appeared to shrink.

Korda believed the key was his serve. Indeed he lost it once, while Rios was able to hold his serve five times out of 12. "I knew I was a better fighter, and I knew he sometimes gives up," said Korda, who at the end sank to his knees in a position of prayer, rather as Bjorn Borg used to.

Later came the scissor-kicks, a cartwheel, and a rush into the crowd to embrace his wife, Regina, and to lift his daughter, Jessica. And later still he paid a moving tribute to his father, Petr — "the man who put tennis in my hands".

On Monday Korda woke up $400,000 richer and ranked No 2 behind Sampras. He also woke up as a Grand Slam winner — at last a true reflection of his talents.

One winner the world may see a little less of this year is Martina Hingis. The 17-year-old Czech-born Swiss, who retained the women's title with a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Spain's Conchita Martinez, intends to cut her schedule, and spend more time riding her horses.

Last Sunday she flew to Tokyo for the Toray Pan Pacific Open, but after that there will be no more tennis until March when she will compete again at Indian Wells and Key Biscayne.

"I was really tired at the end of last year and played just too much. I always knew that this year the pressures would be greater so I need to regulate the tournaments a little more carefully," Hingis said.

A victorious Korda throws his racket to the crowd PHOTO: RICK STEVENS

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

First blood to Arsenal and Liverpool

ARSENAL and Liverpool moved a step closer to a Wembley clash in the final of the Coca-Cola Cup by beating Chelsea and Middlesbrough respectively in the first of their two-leg semi final matches.

Marc Overmars was Arsenal's hero as they triumphed over their London rivals 2-1 at Highbury. The Dutchman fired the Gunners ahead before setting up Stephen Hughes for the second. Mark Hughes came off the bench to head a goal back on 68 minutes.

At Anfield Liverpool had to come from behind to defeat Middlesbrough 2-1. Paul Merson put the visitors ahead in the 29th minute, but the lead was short-lived as Liverpool midfielder Jamie Redknapp quickly equalised when he sent a ferocious drive into the top corner from 25 yards. Robbie Fowler, who missed a number of good chances, finally drove home the winner from a Michael Owen cross.

The winner of this season's Coca-Cola Cup will qualify for the Uefa Cup after all. The move follows a campaign by the Football League after European football's ruling body, Uefa, decided that from this season England's Coca-Cola Cup winners would not be eligible. The loss of the European place led to talk of Premiership clubs pulling out of the domestic cup. Uefa had originally taken away the European place as punishment for the Premier League refusing to slim itself down from 20 to 18 clubs.

ENGLAND'S women hockey team rounded off a successful tour of Australia by beating the hosts, the world and Olympic champions, 4-2 in the second Test at Perth. The visitors won every one of their matches except the first Test in which they went down 1-0.

ROBERT HOWLEY has been appointed as the new Wales Rugby Union captain for the game against Italy on February 7. Howley takes over the reins from Gwyn Jones, who has retired from the game after suffering serious neck and spinal injuries. Scotland meanwhile saw top management changes after Richie Dixon resigned as head coach following the defeat by the Italians last month. Scotland have reverted to the Lions coaches Jim Telfer and Ian McGeechan for the opening match of the Five Nations Championship on Saturday. The new appointments mean that changes may be made to the 23-man squad to be announced for the match against Ireland in Dublin on Saturday.

SPENCER OLIVER, the undefeated European superbantamweight champion from London, retained his title with a dazzling fourth-round victory over the fading 32-year-old French champion Fabrice Benichou in London.

GEORGE COHEN, one of the unsung heroes of England's 1966 World Cup team, is expected to net a record $100,000 for the medal he won at Wembley 32 years ago. The previous highest price for a sporting medal was $30,000 for Ray Kennedy's 1977 European Cup medal with Liverpool. Cohen, who is 57 and has had cancer, is selling the medal to top up his pension fund.

Football results and tables

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP:
Arsenal 3, Southampton 0; Aston Villa 0, Newcastle 1; Bolton Wanderers 1, Coventry 5; Chelsea 2, Barnsley 0; Crystal Palace 0, Leeds Utd 2; Derby County 2, Tottenham 1; Liverpool 0, Blackburn 0; Manchester Utd 0, Leicester 1; Sheff Wed 1, Wimbledon 1.

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE:
Division One:
Charlton 0, Bury 0; Crewe 1, Norwich 0; Huddersfield 0, Swindon 0; Ipswich 2, Bradford 1; Nottm For 1, Oxford 3; Portsmouth 1, Sheff Utd 1; Reading 2, Birmingham 0; Stockport 2, QPR 0; Stoke 1, Middlesbrough 2; Sunderland 4, Port Vale 2; Tranmere 0, Man City 0; Wolves 0, WBA 1.

Division Two:
Blackpool 0, Wigan 2; Brentford 3, Plymouth 1; Bristol City 1, Wrexham 1; Burnley 7, York 2; Carlisle 0, Wycombe 0; Chesterfield 0, Watford 1; Gillingham 1, Bristol R 1; Grimsby 1, Fulham 1; Luton 1, Bournemouth 2; Northampton 0, Oldham 0; Southend 0, Millwall 0; Walsall 1, Preston 1.

Division Three:
Barnet 2, Cambridge 0; Darlington 1, Brighton 0, Exeter 2, Leyton O 2, Lincoln 1, Hull 0; Mansfield 0, Notts Co 2; Peterborough 1, Rotherham 0, Rochdale 0, Cardiff 0; Scarborough 1, Colchester 1, Shrewsbury 1, Chester 1; Swansea 1, Macclesfield 1; Torquay 1, Hartlepool 0.

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE:
Premier Division:
Celtic 3, Aberdeen 1, Dunfermline 3, Kilmarnock 2; Hearts 2, Dundee U 0; Motherwell 6, Hibernian 2; St Johnstone 2, Rangers 0.

First Division:
Ayr 0, Raith 0; Dundee 1, Hamilton 1; Falkirk 2, St Mirren 2; Partick 3, Morton 3; Stirling A 2, Airdrie 2.

Second Division:
Clydebank 1, Stenhousemuir 0, Clyde 2, Brechin 2, East Fife 2, Livingston 0, Forfar 2, Stranraer 1; Queen of Sth 1, Inverness CT 0

Third Division:
Albion 3, Alloa 3, Arbroath 2, Dumbarton 2; E Stirling 1, Montrose 2, Queens Pk 0, Cowdenbeath 4, Ross Co 0, Berwick 0

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	24	15	4	5	51	18	**49**
Chelsea	24	14	3	7	52	25	**45**
Blackburn	24	12	9	3	44	24	**45**
Liverpool	24	13	6	5	39	19	**45**
Arsenal	23	11	8	4	42	26	**41**
Derby	24	11	6	7	39	30	**39**
Leeds	24	11	5	8	34	27	**38**
West Ham	24	11	2	11	36	35	**35**
Leicester	24	8	9	7	27	22	**33**
Newcastle	24	9	6	10	25	29	**32**
Sheff Wed	24	8	6	10	37	47	**30**
Southampton	24	8	4	12	28	33	**28**
Coventry	24	6	9	9	28	34	**27**
Everton	24	7	6	11	28	35	**27**
Aston Villa	24	7	6	11	26	34	**27**
Wimbledon	23	6	8	9	22	27	**26**
Crystal Palace	24	5	8	11	21	34	**23**
Tottenham	24	6	5	13	21	41	**23**
Bolton	24	4	10	10	21	40	**22**
Barnsley	24	6	3	15	20	59	**21**

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE

Division One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nottm Forest	29	17	6	6	47	28	**57**
Middlesbrough	28	16	7	5	46	25	**55**
Charlton	29	15	7	7	53	37	**52**
Sunderland	28	15	7	6	48	28	**52**
Sheff Utd	29	13	12	4	45	31	**51**
Wolverhampton	29	14	6	9	40	29	**48**
West Brom	29	13	6	10	30	28	**45**
Stockport	29	13	5	11	48	41	**44**
Birmingham	29	11	10	8	38	22	**43**
Swindon	30	12	7	11	34	41	**43**
Bradford	30	10	11	9	32	32	**41**
Norwich	29	11	6	12	29	41	**39**
Ipswich	28	9	11	8	35	30	**38**
Crewe	29	11	4	14	35	42	**37**
Reading	29	9	9	11	30	42	**36**
Oxford Utd	29	9	6	14	36	43	**33**
QPR	29	8	9	12	30	43	**33**
Stoke	29	8	8	13	30	44	**32**
Huddersfield	29	7	9	13	31	41	30
Man City	29	7	8	14	33	34	29
Port Vale	29	8	5	16	33	45	29
Tranmere	27	6	9	12	28	34	27
Bury	29	4	14	11	25	38	26
Portsmouth	28	6	6	16	31	46	24

Division Two

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Watford	29	19	7	3	45	20	**64**
Bristol City	29	18	6	5	52	22	**60**
Oldham	29	11	12	6	43	31	**45**
Fulham	29	12	9	8	38	28	**45**
Bristol Rovers	29	12	8	9	42	43	**44**
Northampton	29	11	11	7	32	25	**44**
Grimsby	27	11	9	7	37	24	**42**
Chesterfield	30	9	14	7	27	24	**41**
Bournemouth	29	10	10	9	36	31	**40**
Gillingham	29	10	9	10	36	39	**39**
Millwall	28	11	6	11	33	35	**39**
York	29	9	11	9	36	39	**38**
Wrexham	28	9	11	8	33	34	**38**
Walsall	27	10	7	10	31	32	**37**
Blackpool	29	10	6	13	36	46	**36**
Wigan	28	10	5	13	42	44	**35**
Wycombe	29	8	11	10	35	39	**35**
Preston	29	9	7	13	34	34	**34**
Luton	29	8	8	13	35	46	**32**
Carlisle	29	8	6	15	38	46	**30**
Burnley	29	7	9	13	33	39	**30**
Brentford	30	7	9	14	32	51	**30**
Plymouth	29	6	10	13	36	45	**28**
Southend	30	7	7	16	30	65	**28**

Division Three

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Notts County	30	19	8	3	53	29	**65**
Peterborough	29	14	10	5	53	29	**52**
Barnet	30	15	7	8	44	32	**52**
Scarborough	30	14	7	9	49	42	**49**
Macclesfield	30	13	10	7	42	31	**49**
Chester	30	14	6	10	42	35	**48**
Rotherham	30	12	11	7	48	39	**47**
Torquay	30	13	8	9	42	38	**47**
Exeter	30	11	13	6	46	34	**46**
Lincoln City	29	12	10	7	34	35	**46**
Leyton Orient	29	12	8	9	40	28	**44**
Hartlepool	30	9	15	6	40	33	**42**
Colchester	30	11	8	11	48	48	**41**
Scunthorpe	29	11	6	12	34	39	**39**
Darlington	29	9	8	12	38	47	**35**
Mansfield	28	8	10	10	35	33	**34**
Cardiff	29	6	16	7	26	29	**34**
Cambridge Utd	30	7	12	11	40	43	**33**
Shrewsbury	28	8	8	12	38	43	**32**
Swansea	30	9	5	16	31	42	**32**
Rochdale	30	9	3	18	32	41	**30**
Hull	30	7	5	18	40	54	**26**
Brighton	30	4	10	16	24	42	**22**
Doncaster	28	2	6	20	19	75	**12**

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE

Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	23	14	6	3	54	25	**48**
Celtic	23	15	3	5	42	16	**48**
Hearts	23	15	3	5	51	30	**48**
St Johnstone	23	9	5	9	26	29	**32**
Kilmarnock	23	8	6	9	27	40	**30**
Dundee Utd	23	6	7	10	32	30	**25**
Dunfermline	23	6	6	11	25	43	**24**
Motherwell	23	6	5	12	31	40	**23**
Aberdeen	23	5	7	10	23	36	**22**
Hibernian	23	4	6	13	28	42	**18**

First Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dundee	23	12	8	3	36	13	**44**
Falkirk	22	12	4	6	39	31	**40**
Raith	22	10	6	6	32	21	**36**
Airdrie	22	8	10	4	28	25	**34**
Hamilton	21	8	6	7	28	27	**30**
St Mirren	23	7	5	11	28	37	**26**
Ayr	21	6	5	10	28	32	**23**
Partick	23	5	8	10	32	40	**23**
Stirling	22	5	8	9	30	40	**23**
Gr Morton	23	5	6	12	27	37	**21**

Second Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Clydebank	20	11	8	1	30	14	**41**
Livingston	19	9	6	4	29	22	**33**
Queen of Sth	20	9	3	8	31	31	**30**
East Fife	21	9	3	9	30	36	**30**
Forfar	20	7	6	7	37	35	**27**
Stranraer	21	6	7	8	33	33	**25**
Clyde	21	6	7	8	28	31	**25**
Stenhousemuir	20	6	5	9	25	31	**23**
Inverness Cal	20	5	7	8	37	29	**22**
Brechin	20	3	8	9	22	40	**17**

Third Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arbroath	21	12	4	5	46	28	**40**
Alloa	20	12	1	7	42	28	**37**
Ross County	20	10	5	5	43	24	**35**
East Stirling	21	11	1	9	32	30	**34**
Albion	20	9	4	7	36	37	**31**
Berwick	21	8	5	8	31	33	**29**
Queen's Park	22	7	7	8	29	30	**28**
Dumbarton	21	4	8	9	29	37	**20**
Montrose	20	5	4	11	27	48	**19**
Cowdenbeath	20	5	1	14	15	38	**16**

Golf Heineken Classic

Woosnam blows his chance

IAN WOOSNAM was blown away in the windswept final round of the Heineken Classic in Perth, losing by one stroke to his Ryder Cup team-mate, Thomas Bjorn of Denmark.

The Welshman recorded a round of 76 that included four bogeys in a row around the turn. He also three-putted the 17th green, but even then had a chance to force a play-off at the last when a great approach shot left him with a six-foot eagle putt.

His ball lipped out and Bjorn hung on to win with a closing round of 74 for a total of 280, eight under par. The $180,000 first prize was presented to Bjorn only a week after he nearly flew home with food poisoning. Woosnam collected $100,000.